

Bandwagon

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THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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BANDWAGON

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

Pat White was a center ring animal trainer on the Carson & Barnes Circus for nearly ten years. Her versatility was shown with wild animals, horses and elephants.

The photo on the cover was taken during the 1984 Carson & Barnes season by Bill Biggerstaff who kindly supplied the color separations.

CHS ELECTIONS UP COMING

CHS members are encouraged to make nominations for the offices of president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, and directors for the bi-annual election to be held in December 1993. Directors may be nominated only by members from their district.

Those wishing to make nominations should send them to Stuart Thayer, CHS Election Commissioner, 430 17th Avenue East, Seattle, Washington 98112 before December 1. A ballot listing the two leading nominees for each position will be enclosed in the November-December *Bandwagon*. The new officers' terms will begin on January 1, 1994, and the results will be published in the January-February 1994 issue.

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CORRECTIONS

Two illustrations were transposed in Stuart Thayer's "The Barnum & London New York Tableaus: Recent Research," in the July-August *Bandwagon*. The lithograph

captioned by Figure 1 in the article should have accompanied Figure 5, and the one in Figure 5 should have accompanied the caption in Figure 1.

In Richard Reynolds' "Ringling Bros. 1913 "Some Observations and Corrections" in the same issue, Photo No. 2 was identified as Photo 3, and Photo No. 3 as Photo No. 2 in the text.

CHRISTMAS ADS

If you wish to place a greetings advertisement in the November-December giant Christmas *Bandwagon*, do so by November 15.

Placing an ad allows you to send greetings to CHS members but also provides additional funds allowing more pages.

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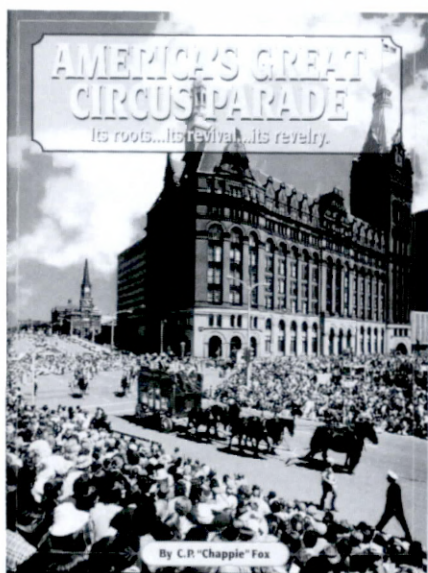
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Pat White is one of the foremost lion and tiger trainers in the country. Best known as a feature on the Carson and Barnes Circus from 1981 through 1990, she retired after the 1990 season, moving to Cody, Wyoming where she worked in an art foundry and sculpted. The following question and answer session was conducted at the Circus Historical Society Convention in Clare, Michigan on August 21, 1992. White, a native of Clare, had returned home from Cody to see her family, and visit Carson and Barnes and her cats for the first time since she had left. In February of this year she returned to the business, presenting a Jim Clubb cat act on the Tiger Show and Yano Circus in Japan where she is currently working. This interview was transcribed for the Bandwagon by D. Evelyn Riker.

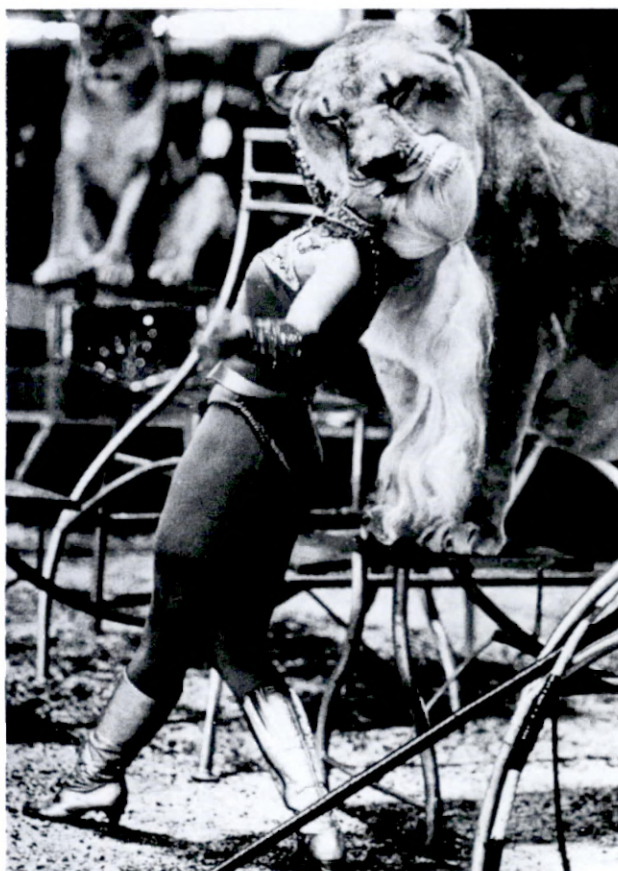
White: I really didn't have anything prepared this morning. There were just a couple of things I wanted to share with you, and then I'll just open up the room for questions. One thing I've been asked most frequently since I left is, "How is life in Wyoming?" Well, it's nippy in the wintertime, has lovely scenery; you don't encounter the adrenalin rushes that you do working with lions and tigers every day, but you learn to cope with that. Sometimes the publicity doesn't stop, even after you're out of the business. I want to share one kind of fun little thing here with you. Now, nobody admits to buying the *National Enquirer*, but everybody does, isn't that right? This *Enquirer* is dated September 20, 1983 [shows paper], and they had a one page spread which gave your typical *National Enquirer* info of who it is and what they're doing and that sort of thing. It was a picture of Rex [the lion] and I doing the head-in-the-mouth with a really interesting angle on the shot—I look a little like Ichabod Crane here—and they had a second picture that showed a little bit more of what I was doing. Nothing particularly outstanding, but a nice little one page thing. Now, after I had left the show and moved up to Cody eight years later, there were a lot of adjustments to be made. This, however, was one adjustment for which I was unprepared. Imagine my surprise and dismay as I was standing in the grocery check-out line in Cody, Wyoming and opened up the *Weekly World News*, with George Bush and the

An Interview With **PAT WHITE**

alien on the front, and found out about my own death under an alias. I would like to take just a moment and read this article to you, because it's really quite amusing. I was a little embarrassed, too, as I was standing there in line, because though they didn't have that secondary picture that shows anything of my face, I recognized me, and began saying, "Ooh, that's me! That's me!" The woman in line behind me looked at me strangely and stepped about four steps back.

Okay, now finding out about your death under an assumed name is an odd experience. It says here: "JAWS OF DEATH. Circus lion suffocates sexy big

Pat performs the head-in-the-lion's-mouth trick in a photo similar to the one used in the *National Enquirer* article mentioned in the interview. Pat White photo.



the life out of her body. The tragedy under Kessler Brothers Circus Big Top [White: Isn't Kessler Brothers a brandy or something?] while giving a performance in Stufin, Belgium, when the big cat, [White: now we all know that Big Rex was a clipped male, right?] a six year old lioness named Gretel, finally released the woman who had raised her from a cub, she lay down beside Hannah's lifeless body and threatened to attack anyone who tried to approach. The standoff ended when a roustabout fired a bullet into Gretel's brain. [White: Isn't that awful?] As incredible as it may seem, Hannah didn't die from being bitten, a circus spokesman said, in fact the only mark she had was a small bruise under her right ear—she died of suffocation. Her head was entirely inside the lion's mouth; perhaps its tongue covered her nose and mouth, or maybe the lion simply sucked the air out of her lungs. [White: That's my favorite part.] The sad fact is that Hannah is dead because of this terrible accident, nobody believes for an instant that Gretel meant to harm her, she just got carried away with her show of affection."

So you see, there is life after death. I know that I should have written to them and told them that if the age they quoted for me doesn't start with a 2 instead of a 3, I want nothing to do with it. Let's go ahead and start with questions—you ask them, I'll answer them if I can.

Question: Would you tell us how you got into the business and the shows and training after that?

White: I sure could. I graduated from Clare High School in 1973 and following that I spent one year at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. I had always enjoyed animals, I always enjoyed theater, and it never really occurred to me that there was anything I could do in a career with animals besides being a veterinarian, which, with all due respect, is a very honorable profession, but I didn't know if being around sick and injured animals all

the time was going to be my cup of tea. While I was at Western, at Reid Fieldhouse, Ringling Brothers showed there for a weekend. It was the first circus I really recalled seeing. I had just turned eighteen.

I guess my folks took me to a couple of shows when I was smaller but, to be honest, I didn't remember them. I do remember the Shrine Circus in Saginaw. We used to get on buses—I was about in the third grade—but you know what I remember about that? Little chameleons, live chameleons that you could buy and stick on your shirt like this—that's what I remember. So the show that I saw on campus at Western was the first real circus I recall seeing. And it was as simple as this: as I was sitting there watching the show, Wolfgang Holtzmeir, a lot of you are familiar with his name, was working twenty-one lions that year. I sat there watching the lion act and I said to myself, well, there you go, there's the ideal combination of both my interests; I could work with animals and perform. This, evidently, Pat, is what you're supposed to be doing. I searched around and found the nearest place that had trained wild animal acts and that was at Cedar Point, Sandusky, Ohio. Through a course of events, I ended up working at Cedar Point the following summer. I never did return to school, and began working full-

One of Pat's tigers jumps through a flaming hoop in a Carson and Barnes publicity shot. Pfening Archives.



time for Jungle Larry [Tetzlaff] at the African Safari. They were in Sandusky in the summer time and down in Naples, Florida in the winter time. I worked there about three-and-a-half years and got the basics of working chimps and elephants and cats, and handling various other exotic animals. Most importantly, I learned how to care for the animals. I still value those lessons most.

Following that in the fall of '77, I went to work for John Cuneo's Hawthorne Circus Corporation. I had worked lions at Jungle Larry's. I knew once I had dipped my fingers into it, that was what I wanted to do. The summer of '77, I had gotten married [to trainer Roy Wells]. In the summer of '78 we went up to Marineland and Game Farm in Niagara Falls, Ontario. I was just sort of chief cook and bottle washer that year; with a lot of ambition and a lot of enthusiasm but no act to work, because my husband was working the cat act at the time.

In the meantime, Eloise Berchtold was killed by one of her elephants and Kay Rosaire had purchased her cats—and she was in need of someone to work her second act. She booked both acts up on Gatini, which played eastern Canada, and she, of course, had her own lions; but she also had Eloise's mixed act and had no one work it. I worked this mixed act of three tigers, three leopards, a cougar, and a jaguar for one season. Through a very unfortunate chain of events, there was a mix up on some worm medicine and Kay lost her entire act of six lions within eighteen hours. It was just a terribly, terribly tragic thing. But, since she did own two acts, it only made sense that at the end of that year, she would take the mixed act back to work herself, which she did. That was 1979.

During that time, my husband, now ex-husband, and I met Gee Gee Engesser. She had elephants and ponies. We got to know her very very well. She was on the show that same season when I had the mixed act up on Circus Gatini. Does anybody here know Gee Gee? What a gal, huh? Anyway, Gee Gee said, "Listen, you two, if you don't have anywhere to work, don't worry about that; you will always have work with me." So Roy and I went to work for her. Roy



The head-in-mouth from a different angle, Milwaukee, 1986. Pat White photo.

worked the elephants. I styled the elephants, and I worked the pony drill, and that was the season of '80. We were on Cirque International, actually it was still Gatini, but they just changed the name to protect the guilty, or whatever. But that's another story.

Anyhow, following that year, it became crystal clear to me that I was not going to be able to spend much time away from the cats. Pat Anthony was on Cirque International that year, that was the last year he worked cats. Aside from spending many, many hours washing little white ponies and, you know, doing this behind them [makes shoveling motion], I spent my time around the cats with Pat. Anyway, I realized that I needed to get back in with the cats instead of styling elephants and working the pony drill. I missed them.

And so, as fate would have it, the following year in February, 1981, I got a call from Mr. [D. R.] Miller [of Carson and Barnes Circus]. He needed someone to work with the cats. I went down there in February of '81 and never left until a year-and-a-half ago.

So, that's my life in a nut shell!

Question: Tell us about the changing of the circus name in Canada?

White: Oh, well. There are a few financial details that I am not entirely familiar with, so I kind of hate to relate stories from twelve years ago that I'm not real clear on. Let me just say there was evidently a little fishy business going on that made them think that perhaps if they went out the next year under a different name, it might be a little more comfortable.

Question: I understand that you personally took care of the cats, [that you] didn't trust that to anybody.

White: I did for many, many years, up



Pat with Ceylon during the 1990 season, her last with Carson and Barnes. James S. Cole photo.

until my son was born. Then it became evident that something had to give, there wasn't enough time to be full-time Mom and take care of the cats full-time properly. It was either leave [my son] Nick with a baby sitter all the time and continue to take care of the cats, or get a cage hand to help out with the cats and go ahead and do the Mom thing. So I opted for starting with a cage hand. And I must tell you, that was a source of major aggravation over the years. I was called some of the most awful names: "Picky," among them. That was one of the nicer ones. I just wanted everything to be right, and I just couldn't understand if I can clean out a freezer, if I can keep the cages spotless, if I can rake up the stuff and stack the tools, and unload 800 pounds of meat—if I can do it, why can't this guy? It would drive me crazy sometimes. I just didn't buy it when they would say things like—"oh, I'm too tired"—my response was "do it anyway." I did the cage work for many, many years, then I had to go ahead and take on a cage hand. I went through a couple, three of them, too. Per season.

Question: Could you tell us a little bit about the year or two you had the moose, and what your plans were for him? I know he was dear to your heart.

White: Oh, I'd love to. 1987 was when the idea first came to mind. I was wanting to enlarge the cat act and I drew up a bunch of plans on how I could have a second cage wagon and run a stringer chute. I wanted to enlarge the act to about 14-15 cats. I thought it was a wonderful idea, and I had freezer space all figured out

and everything. To make a long story short, after discussing it with management, it became apparent that I was the only one who thought it was a good idea. I was disappointed about that, so I thought, well, I'll just go ahead and try and do something on my own. I made a list of exotic animals I found interesting, and after a few months, narrowed it down until I finally got down to two animals. One was an okapi. Does anybody know what those are? They're a relative of the giraffe—very uncommon in captivity. The other was a moose.

Well, the okapi would have cost me about \$80,000, so it didn't take long to figure out that was not such a good idea. That left me with the idea of a moose. I did as much research as I could. There were a lot of people who were very helpful in going to local libraries and trying to locate what information they could on moose. They would then mail it to me. Over the course of 1987, I ended up with a stack of information on moose this thick [holds fingers wide apart], and only this much [holds fingers close together] on moose in captivity. I didn't have a lot to go on, and nutrition was the most touchy thing; even the Detroit Zoo and the Minneapolis Zoo, which both had moose, had not had very good luck. What made me think that I could do any better, I don't know. But I was just certain I wanted to try this.

I had a custom horse trailer built. It had living quarters in the front, a tack room in the middle, and a nice air conditioned stall in the back. I tried to accommodate the moose with absolutely everything I could and everything he needed. It took me a while to locate some [moose], too. Finding a baby moose was not easy. Altogether I found four moose that were available for sale. One of them was a big bull, which I knew I couldn't mess with. Two of them were about two years old in captivity but had not been handled. And then I found one itty-bitty, tiny baby six months old up in Canada, in Dryden, Ontario, and I said "That's the one I want." His real mother, by the way, had been hit by a car and that's why he was at the game farm to begin with. Mr. Miller and I made the money arrangements. After we came in off the road in '87 I drove to Owosso, Michigan, to pick up the custom made trailer. I then drove up to Ontario, picked up the moose and drove back to Hugo. Having the moose was an experience that I wouldn't trade for a mil-

lion bucks. It didn't work, but it was a good idea.

What kind of plans did I have for him? You name it. I was going to break that little bugger to ride. I could throw a saddle on him just like a horse. I had a little rubber covered snaffle bit, and could put a bridle on him. I didn't put any weight on him because he was so young yet; tall, but young. I had every intention of breaking him to ride. As a matter of fact, I have photos of him all tacked up, but I don't have them with me at the moment. I wish I did. I thought perhaps it would be a great photo op, you know, real Kodak moments with sponsors, because he was so unique. I also intended to buy a sulky and break him to drive. Advertising; Moosehead Beer, Hardee's "Big Moose" summer campaign. "Northern Exposure" was still on the drawing board, but I'd heard it was coming to T. V. within six months. Plans. Big Ones. Expo's, Disney, the possibilities were endless. I was going to make him a star.

Some of the funny, cute little things that I recall so dearly were when he was very little. There was a lot of bonding and imprinting, because he was so young; and as far as he was concerned, I was Mama. That's all he knew and that's all he cared about. One time, I had gone in to see him when he was out in his corral off the end of the trailer. I had forgotten something so I went back into the house, and I kinda forgot to shut the doors and he followed me into the living quarters—I was really quite startled. THERE'S A MOOSE IN

While he didn't perform, MacDermott the moose travelled with Pat during the 1988 season. Pat White photo.



MY LIVING ROOM, THERE'S A MOOSE IN MY LIVING ROOM! My son was up on the fifth wheel just doubled over in laughter. I was afraid he [the moose] might panic, but he was just as cool as a cucumber. He went over and shoved the swivel chair a little bit, he thought that was kind of interesting. He thought the sink was a lot of fun, so he fooled around in that a little bit, then turned around and walked back out.

Based on my observations of this moose I don't feel that people give moose nearly enough credit for their intelligence. They look so doggone silly that people just assume they're not very bright. But I've found in my personal experience that this is not the case. He was ten-fold brighter than any horse I had ever worked with; well, with the exception of one particular buckskin. The moose amazed me. He learned quickly, he retained what he learned and it was an absolute delight to work with him. He was remarkable.

The bonding really made for some sweet moments. One time in winter quarters I had gone to town and he jumped his fence. I don't know how many of you have been to Hugo, but he had many acres in which he could have taken off. I came back from town, and he was just standing there waiting where the truck should have been parked, just standing in the driveway waiting for me to come home. Another time we were coming through Montana, and we were right on the edge of the lot. As far as the eye could see there was not a fence, many mountains, and just space. He jumped the fence that day, too, but instead of taking off into

On his right is MacDermott's lunch, tree boughs; on his left is Pat and his specially designed trailer. John Polacsek photo.

the wild blue yonder, he came and looked in the living room window and started crying because he wanted a banana. He had his chance, but he wanted to stay.

Anyway, everybody's saying, "What happened to him?" Well, I'm not really sure. He was perfectly healthy. We made it the whole '88 season. I worked up this particular diet for him which seemed to be effective. Each day he would get pellets high in ash content, various vegetables and fruits, hay and of course his tree leaves. Every day I stopped to cut some kind of boughs for him. I got in trouble a couple of times for that. I kinda raided a couple people's yards. That was only in a pinch, you know. Cottonwood, willow, maple or aspen, depending on what part of the country we were in. Everything was fine, he was perfectly healthy; then on February 28, 1989—I remember he was up romping that night at two o'clock in the morning. It was like an earthquake when he galloped in and out of the trailer; anyway at eight o'clock the next morning, he had died. He had just laid down and his heart just stopped beating. I brought a vet out and had an autopsy done. The veterinarian said that for all intents and purposes, with the exception of his being dead, this animal was perfectly healthy. So we figured that there must have been a stroke or something similar. There were no signs of a heart attack, no obstructions anywhere. It could have been a stroke. His brain shut down. I still don't know. That's why I didn't try again.

But he was an absolute delight, he was steady, stable and funny, and I feel badly that it ended the way it did, but I would not have traded that experience for anything. I still miss him.

Question: What was his name?

White: His name was MacDermott.

Question: How long did you have him?

White: All together, about fifteen months. He went from this big to THIS BIG, a little over eye level.

White's brother Dan: Around Cody, she's known as the best moose caller in Wyoming. You should see when they take off running and she starts calling, they turn around and kind of walk back.

White: Dan is quite an avid hunter and I have yet to disclose my secrets of moose calling to him. But, it is kind of



MacDermott in saddle. Pat intended to break him to ride. Pat White photo.

interesting that the calls that MacDermott taught me worked with wild moose, too, so it wasn't just a thing between him and me. Kinda fun.

Question: Would you show us how to call a moose?

White: This is video taped, and twenty years from now this is going to look really peculiar. Actually, the sound that my moose made to me was a mildly distressed baby calling Mama sound. And it went something like this [makes moose noise] and, truly, from yards away even a wild moose will stop. Just one more quick story about him, which I find quite touching. I had his feed bin in the corner of the stall. I had it hooked on with chains because he would get a little rambunctious sometimes. Well, when it was feeding time, he knew how to get a response from me. See, he didn't understand time changes, he only understood his tummy, so when we would go through a time change I would be on the schedule of the time zone we were in. If I was a little bit late with the chow, he would stand there and take the dangling piece of chain and go "chinka, chinka, chinka," until I would come out and feed him.

He had some trouble with his shoulder and I had taken him to Fort Collins, Colorado to have him operated on at the university there. They have real nice facilities. He was a little confused by this unusual building and the new people around. He didn't know who they were, and whenever he would get a bit insecure, he would just want to close in tighter and tighter. Well, it was pretty hard leaving him there. I only had to leave him there for a couple of days, but





this was Mama's boy and I didn't want to go. We put him in a stall, started to walk away, turning around every three feet to wave goodbye. Of course he was crying his pitiful "don't go away" cry. I had just gotten out of sight and suddenly I heard "chinka, chinka, chinka." I turned around and looked. He had climbed up with his front feet onto the watering trough and was reaching over to the next gate where there was a length of chain about this long. Moose necks are not very long, but he was stretching for everything he was worth to reach this chain: "chinka, chinka, chinka." So I spent about another hour with him. I thought, if he tried that hard to call me back, I'd better go.

Question: Would you mind telling us how you were severely injured?

White: This group of people, no, I wouldn't; because it was just a dumb accident. Most people, yes, I would mind. Anybody who has a notebook and a pencil, I don't usually tell them either. It was just a stupid, foolish thing. Nobody likes to brag about mistakes. I had gone down to Florida to pick up a little tiger from Josip Marcan [then trainer for Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus] and I had been down there four or five days and everything was going fine. We were just visiting and stuff. Well, it was the last day and I was going to leave. Josip is able to exercise all his cats together in the arena, and I think he had fourteen tigers in exercising. All we were going to do was run the cats in, go to dinner, load the little tiger and I was going to leave. There were maybe eight or ten tigers lying down right in the middle of the arena, three or four up pacing on the far side of the arena. There were no cats up close. At that particular time I had been around cats thirteen years; I knew to watch, and I looked! I reached down to open the chute door. I'm right handed and I reached out like this, turning a quarter turn away from the arena. That was all it took. A little female tiger named Tora took two bounds across the arena and dove. I felt something go across the top of

Working Kay, Barbara, and Minnie during a Carson and Barnes performance. Bill Biggerstaff photo.

my back and snag my left shoulder. I felt my back slam against the arena; I was being pulled down. She had grabbed me through the bars! The thought that went through my mind was "Oh, my Lord, I've been hit; I've got to give it everything I have and get away NOW." And, of course, it's all going through my mind in a flash.

At that moment, my world began moving in fast forward and slow motion simultaneously. That's pretty common during an accident. I had an enormous surge of adrenalin (you've heard about mothers picking a car up off their kid). Every bit of power and strength I had was available that second. I lunged. I thought, I know something's going to tear, but it's better than getting chewed up. I went "oomph" and I didn't move. I was pinned. At that point, she had stuck her mouth through--the bars were about this far apart--and she had gotten her top jaw through, her muzzle, and the bottom one had hung up on the bar; which was about the only thing that saved my left arm. The tiger had managed to get her top jaw through the bars sideways. Her bottom jaw came through the next space in the bars. So in her mouth she now had a bar--and my left forearm. She bit down. Her tooth broke off when it hit the bone [groans from the audience]. Yeah, it hurt! Josip came running and punched her in the nose. She released my arm and I was able to roll away. The whole event, though it seemed like an eternity, lasted five seconds. In that length of time I had an injury on my back, the doctors were certain a claw punctured my lung, and I had a tiger tooth in my arm. There were other lacerations. I cringe when I think of these. At some point there was a paw with extended claws in my face. A claw tore open my left nostril. There was also a paw with extended claws across my mid-

section. There are light diagonal scars across my stomach. Thank God, they didn't connect.

It was really scary. I was very, very angry with myself that it had happened. Everything healed up, everything's fine; I've still got the tooth for a souvenir to remind me just how quickly things can happen. But, I'm happy to say that except for just a little snag here and there over the years, in 17 years my cats never hurt me. I've always worked cats with all their teeth and all their claws, too.

You know we've all heard Mabel Stark stories; eighty percent of her body was covered with scars, and she nearly lost her leg more than once. There's a terrible story in *Hold That Tiger*, where she told about two cats fighting over her. She had slipped on some wet straw in the arena. She had two male tigers come in from different directions, and they were going to draw and quarter her. She was conscious the whole time, and they were pulling in opposite directions on her thigh.

And so, comparatively speaking, my accident was a minor injury, for which I'm very grateful; but it sure hurt like heck and I didn't want it to happen ever again. But that's the story.

Question: Did you end up with that cat? Did you buy that cat?

White: I didn't take THAT cat! No, I didn't take that tiger. I picked a different one. I didn't have any death wish, really. Anybody else?

Question: This bonding between you and the animals, how long does it take to bond with some, and are there some you bond with more than others?

White: Absolutely, there are some that respond to interaction with humans more readily. Some cats I bonded with more than others, certainly. It depended entirely on them. I treated all my cats equally. I used the same methods of breaking on them all. Some just took to it more than others. They had distinct personalities. Some took to training more quickly. A lot depended on their mentality, not just an emotional thing. There were smart ones and dumb ones, and everything in between. Sometimes the dumber ones were a little bit easier to train because they never questioned anything. "Come here." "Okay. I have no reason to question that." A smart cat may give you a "what for?" look.

Ted Bowman [a Carson and Barnes executive] used to tease me about this tiger I had named Felix. He looked like a "Felix." He was cross eyed, sweet as pie, dumber than a stump, but real consistent with working. Ted would just tease me mercilessly about "that old cross-eyed thing that hasn't got any business in public, what are you doing working that thing?"

And I'd tell him to quit picking on him, he's a nice cat.

And here's Rex, [shows the photo in the *National Enquirer*]. He and I were about as close as humans and animals can possibly get. It's a very difficult thing to explain; it goes way beyond a trainer-trainee, teacher-pupil sort of thing; it becomes very spiritual, it really does. Once that begins to happen, there's no stopping it. There were a few cats over the years that I never got that close to; they were consistent workers and I had them in the act for a long time. Certainly they liked me all right, I guess. They never ate me. But this cat Rex was somebody very special. There were others. An old lion named Freddy; more recently, a male tiger named Ceylon that I did the shoulder stand with the last couple of seasons on Carson and Barnes. And naughty Topaz, my liger. She was good for comic relief.

Question: How do you teach a cat not to bite your head off?

White: You say, "Don't do that, don't you bite my head." Gee, I don't know. It starts very early. I'm not sure I entirely understand it. I guess all I can tell you is that it comes from inside. You assert your authority through some unspoken thing. They just know and understand. In their own society they have a pecking order. Now, they sort it out a little more blatantly than I have to in an arena, but it's just understood from the beginning: "I'm in charge, I'll take care of you, you're good to me, I'm good to you, everything will work out, and the only thing I ask of you is just don't challenge my authority. You don't want to break their spirit; you don't want them conquered. It makes for a poor working relationship and a mentally depleted animal. It's important to point out is that it is not necessary to physically overpower these animals. I'm living proof of that. Lions and tigers, who are bonafide dangerous animals, can be worked effectively without hostility or abuse. It's really very hard to give cut and dried answers to questions about animal training, because there's so many variables involved. It depends on the cat, it depends on the trick, it depends on the situation, it depends on how they interact with the other animals; there's just a lot of things going on.

Sometimes other people, trainers particularly, couldn't understand why I allowed the cats to get away with so much mischief in the arena. Slap boxing and playing tag were two common games frequently played. As long as it wasn't too disruptive, I didn't care. Sometimes you just have to let them do stuff like that. Sometimes you just have to cut them a little slack and let them play, kind of like kids.

So, how do you teach them not to chew



Pat poses with Kay, Barbara, and Minnie. Pat White collection.

you up? I don't know, you just don't ever let them think in the first place that they're able to do so, I guess.

Question: How do you teach the trainers to put their head in the lion's mouth?

White: I'll be perfectly honest, I did not break this trick. Josip Marcan broke it. I was with Rex for ten years and did the head-in-the-mouth over 5000 times, but I had never broken the trick myself. The reason I didn't is because it went against the grain of what I felt a cat act should be portraying to today's audience. I wanted to show the grace and beauty and the agility of the cats. Yeah, they made me dress up in a fancy wardrobe and stuff, but my purpose, I felt, was to be out there to show the animals. This is an old time trick that I used for a long time. I used it because the people liked it. But for me personally, that was a "aren't I wonderful and grand and brave to do this stupid thing? And, look, I got away with it, too. Taa, daa!" Well, I did it for the audience because they liked it. I didn't really like the trick very much.

Question: Do lions really have bad breath?

White: Only if they've been eating a lot of chicken and then it's a little fowl [groans from the audience].

Question: Would you talk about how you dealt with the animal rights people?

White: I think everybody here is familiar with what's going on with the circus industry battling the animal rights activists from PETA. For those of you not familiar, that's People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. I have no qualms

about treating animals ethically. I know I've treated my animals ethically for seventeen years and I don't feel as though I have to justify it to them, either. It's easy to jump on a bandwagon; be a weekend crusader. Go out there and hold signs saying, "These people are horrible and they beat their animals and keep them in small, dirty, cramped cages." They won't come on the lot and watch my act. They refuse invitations to winter quarters to watch me break animals. How do they suppose they have a clue what I do? Where do they get their information. From old movies with collars, chains and ropes being used to break cats? No, don't talk to me about mistreatment of my animals. They're fat, sassy and healthy. I spent 365 days a year with them. It wasn't a weekend thing or a sometimes thing. I was there every minute; up at two o'clock in the morning to check on them or sleeping in the barn if an animal was ill. I find it highly insulting that they assume because they hear the word "circus" that automatically the animals are grossly mistreated, abused and terribly unhappy.

Hey, I can tell you about happy cats—it was important to me that I had happy cats. Most of you people have probably seen me work. I didn't have a lot of snarling and growling. Shoot, on hot days sometimes they'd fall asleep on their seat, but that was okay with me. As long as they were content. Oh sure, the audience "oohs" and "aahs" if there's lots of roars. But, so what? It's not worth it to me to agitate the cats for the sake of the show. Well lions, lions are blustery, noisy and boisterous anyway; so I exclude lions from that comment. They don't mean one quarter of what they say. But, tigers, I've

never seen any point in aggravating them to that degree.

I'll tell you something that really makes me mad. A friend in Florida has been keeping up with new propaganda that the animal rights activists' organizations are putting out. He read something in a Florida paper that made him angry, so he decided to call the head office of PETA in Washington, D. C. I said, "If you are going to call them, there is something I want you to ask them." I proposed this question: "Just suppose you're successful with your campaign to close down all zoos and circus animal acts. There will be thousands of animals across the country with no financial support. Chimps that live 40 years, lions and tigers that live 20 years, elephants that live 60 years, well into the next century. If you succeed and put all of us out of business, what will happen to these animals?" And their answer was, "Euthanize each and every one of them because they'd be better off dead." I'll tell you, I was appalled at their answer. They claim absolute outrage at an animal trainer's belief that an animal can be happy, healthy and content in captivity. And I claim absolute outrage at their belief that these magnificent animals would be better off dead. I am furious with PETA's "solution." Do their supporters realize this is what the organization is working toward?

Question: How many of the animals did you actually own yourself?

White: None. They all belonged to Mr. Miller except the moose. He was mine; he was my project.

Question: But you were able to pick them out, the ones that you wanted.

White: Yes, Mr. Miller did afford me that liberty, and I'm grateful for that. People have asked me over the years why didn't you get your own cats, Pat? Why didn't you work up your own act? Well the answer was really quite simple. Why on earth would I want to do that? I absolutely loved Carson & Barnes, and if I was going to be on the road, I can't think of any place else I'd rather be than Carson & Barnes. Well, now, Mr. Miller bought the cats, he fed the cats, he paid the vet for all their vaccinations, he built the new props, he even bought the paint to paint the new props, and what did I get to do? The fun stuff and draw a salary. Now, you tell me I should go \$150,000 into debt and try to eke out a living on my own out there. Unh, unh. Doing spot dates and driving 1,500 miles between cities. No thanks.

Question: Did you ever have people approach you wanting to become trainers?

White: I can't tell you how many times



Pat working Bucky on Carson and Barnes. Bill Biggerstaff photo.

I've had people, both male and female, came up and say, "I want to work lions!" I'd reply, "So you want to be a lion trainer; oh, you do, do you? You think it would be terrific to get in there and work those animals." I learned a real valuable lesson years ago from Roy [Wells] and I never forgot it; in fact I used the line myself more than once. When I first approached Roy, this was in the early seventies, I said, "Well, Roy, I'd really like to work those cats, I sure would. I'd like to work those cats, I'd like to get in there and be a lion trainer." He said, "Well, there's one thing that you have to learn to handle perfectly before you ever step into the ring." I said, "I know what that is, it's a whip, you gotta be able to bop a fly off their ears like this." "No," he said, "it's not a whip, it's a scraper." So I cleaned cages for years from that one comment, because I was going to show him that it wasn't just the glory or the glamour, I was willing to do the work, too.

And, by golly, at Carson & Barnes I paid a lot of dues. I found out that in winter quarters, the meat did not arrive in a box; it arrived in a big old bloated dead cow. They hand you an axe, they hand you a saw, they hand you a utility knife with a whole box of blades, and say, "There's supper if you want your animals to eat." "Where do I start?" "I don't know, take your pick; it doesn't have to be butchered perfect, but just make sure you don't blow up the stomach." I'll bet you folks are happy to hear about that at this time of day. Anyway, I butchered dozens and dozens of cows over the years.

Question: Swede Johnson always told me that he thought that lions were easier to travel with than tigers. He figured they trained better or something.

White: I don't know. I believe lions are generally harder than tigers, easier keepers. Maybe that's what Swede meant. I think every trainer has his or her preference. There aren't many lion acts around today. Personally, I've always liked lions. I don't know if that's because I began with lions or if it's just something with lions and me that connected. I don't really know. I prefer lions, but I've always thought that the mixture of lions and tigers looked best in an act.

Question: How do you think the cats are going to react tomorrow when you visit [them on Carson and Barnes for the first time since you left]?

White: I went over yesterday [said in a sing song tone]. I couldn't wait.

Interestingly enough, the cats that I thought would recognize me the most quickly, didn't. There is a big tiger that I raised from the time he was eight weeks old. He started out as "Baby Nelson," then "Baby Nelson" grew and grew and turned into "Nelson." He kept growing and turned into "Mr. Nelson." He finally grew to the point he became "Mr. Nelson, Sir." He's huge. He's gorgeous, just gorgeous. He was the one who recognized me first, and that really kind of surprised me because he's usually quite aloof. I thought it would be the naughty liger or the lioness that I worked for so long, but it wasn't; it was him--this big massive tiger.

It felt a little strange being on the lot for the first ten minutes, then it was like I had never left. It was really fun to go some place where people are genuinely glad to see you, like a scene from "Cheers," where everybody knows your name. It was really fun.

Question: Pat, I know you had very close working relations with your cats, the moose, and your horses; and I also know you worked elephants a lot. Would you comment a little bit on that?

White: Sure. You have to start at the back end and work your way around to the front. I'll tell you, the first elephants I worked were at Jungle Larry's and I didn't know anything. I mean nothing. As the years went by I found out just how little I knew. The year Roy and I were around Gee Gee, I learned an awful lot. What a heck of a bull gal she is. Roy is still working with elephants, now with Cuneo. On Carson & Barnes I worked a three act in 1982. I worked a five act in '83 and '84 and they were not particularly friendly elephants, either. They were not killers, but, I don't think they liked me. Then in '85, I took over the big herd; Kay, Barbara and Susie and then Kay, Barbara and Minnie; and I worked them until I left. They were my girls; I mean I just

loved them to death. Kay, especially, because I think she would much rather be a pet; she would prefer to be in somebody's yard eating pancakes out of the window. That would make Kay happy. She's just a good working elephant. Such a good soul. She was so grateful for attention, you know. I would get in trouble with Okie [Carr, Carson and Barnes elephant boss] who would scold me terribly because I used to bring her goodies. That in itself is no crime, but the Carson & Barnes herd is pretty tuned in to each other. I'd sneak her cookies, fruit and vegetables and all that good stuff, and she would be so excited and so delighted that she would start chirping. Then Barbara and Susie and Mona would chime in, and the next thing you know the whole herd was bellowing, 23 of them, and you'd think there'd been an earthquake or something. I got into a lot of trouble for that.

You know, I didn't realize until I worked that herd for six years just how little control I had really had over her [Kay]. I had worked her all those years, she had never run, we had always been close, she had never given me a lick of trouble. We had some pretty wild stuff happen. I remember one time it was the 5th of July. There weren't supposed to be any fireworks, and we were all lined up for the act. Okie was gone. I think he had been hospitalized and there weren't very many of us there. We were standing in line ready to go in and the fireworks started—BOOM, BOOM, BOOM—we had eighteen of them in line and after about two seconds there was me, Kay and Barbara and Minnie, and one guy standing with another elephant, Rosie; and that was it. All the rest were gone. It was very tense, but we made it through the act. I thought if I can handle her through that I have it made. There was the time that the lights went out, not that elephants are afraid of the dark but the people started oohing and aahing, whistling and getting all panicky. So the elephants figured, "apparently we're supposed to be scared." There was an awful commotion in the darkness. Elephants running. People shrieking. No one was hurt, but I was sure Kay and Barbara, notorious runners, would leave. When the lights came up, I had an elephant head under each armpit, much to my surprise and relief. Aha, I thought, I have it made. Two weeks before the season ended in '90, the last year I was there, here I was thinking that I have Kay locked up in a barrel. We're good working partners. I started to run her down the front track for the

long mount, she's the lead elephant. Okie always hollered at the spot I was supposed to stop by saying "Hi," and then I would, in turn, say "Hi, steady, Kay." Well, she didn't stop. She just kept on going even faster and faster, right out of the tent. I totally lost her. Thank goodness she just went back to the picket line, but with twenty others trailing behind her at a dead run. That moment made me realize that all those years she had been ALLOWING me to work her. I couldn't stop her. That was a panicky feeling, you know, to just lose control. If you have an 8,000 pound animal that wants to go somewhere, "Hi, steady," is not gonna stop them. Anyway, elephants are very special creatures.

Question: How do you compare them in intelligence?

White: About a step below a chimpanzee, and about a step above most people I know.

Question: Tell us a little bit about the horse you took home to Cody with you.

White: Sure. Well, anybody who has seen Carson and Barnes anytime throughout the '80s probably noticed that I rode the same horse all the time in spec and menage. After I made the decision to leave, there was a lot of really heart wrenching things that were difficult for me to deal with. I knew I couldn't take any of my cats with me; Kay the elephant was the next prospect and that wasn't real

Pat in jockey outfit on Bucky. John Polacsek photo.



practical, either. Who was left was this big old buckskin horse that I put dibs on ten years before, the minute he walked off the truck. I didn't know a thing about him, but I said, "I want that one," and nobody else rode him for ten years. I was just heartsick and trying to think of how I could come up with some extra money to buy him and take him with me. It was Christmas Eve and some of the showfolks told me D. R. and Isla [Miller] had bought [their daughter] Barbara [Byrd] a new refrigerator, or something like that, and that it was stored in the horse barn. When the Millers were at church we were supposed to go get the refrigerator, load it up, take it over to the house and get it into her kitchen to surprise her. It's a little short handed around Hugo in the wintertime, so they asked if I would help. I started down to the horse barn where there were all these people around and I thought, "what do they need me for with all these people around?" I saw Mr. Miller's van parked there and thought that was a little odd; they were supposed to be in church. Well, I walked up and was evidently standing there looking kind of stupid—what's going on here anyway? About that time, they walked Bucky out of the barn with a great big red bow around his neck, and a great big tag that said, "Merry Christmas, Pat from the Millers and the Byrds."

Look at the time—that's probably about the last story I'm going to tell, but I'll be around. Anyway, Beauford, the dog that showed up in winter quarters eight years ago to scrounge off of the leftover cattle that I butchered (he adopted me); Bucky; Kitty the cat that I found at the San Diego Naval Air Station; my son Nicholas and I are all living happily in Cody, Wyoming now.

Tom Dunwoody: I'd like to say a couple of words here. I have a bull hook and this is kind of unique; it's made by Ollie Miller, the design comes from Cheerful Gardner who had the elephants on Hagenbeck-Wallace; and the wood came out of the Ben Wallace home in Peru, Indiana. When that house was torn down, this was a part of the stair railing, and Ollie saved about 50 of these and there's only about two of them left. So, on behalf of Ollie Miller and the Circus Fans and Circus Historical Society, I'd like to present this to you, Pat.

White: Me? Oh, thank you so much. Oh, my goodness. You know, I know Ollie Miller, he made a couple of hooks for me, but none of them had the history behind them that this one does, so this is really special. Thank you.

SHORT SKETCHES OF FORMER SHOWS

THE KELLY-MILLER BOAT SHOW BUST

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

The 1962 season brought new innovations to the Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus. With Joe MacMahon as general agent, the show for the first time in its 26 years played under the sponsorship of civic organizations and Shrine groups.

The show paraded each day using eight small cages built in 1959 as a nucleus. A band wagon and a pony sized air calliope wagon were built new for the march. Local merchants furnished tractors and pickup trucks, and they along with six pony hitches and midget burros pulled the cages and floats. The parade left the lot each day at 1:15, lasted forty-five minutes, and returned to the lot in time for the matinee. Most of the wagons were miniature replicas of parade wagons of the olden days, according to the show's route book. The parade consisted of eight cages, a hippo, a rhino, the elephant herd, floats, band wagon and calliope. Three additional small wagons were used to carry the bandstand, props and arena. The small wagons were loaded inside the seat wagons and were unloaded each day in a manner similar to runs on a flat car, with the fifth-wheel end of the semis being lowered to the ground.

The show closed its 1962 season in Orange, Texas on October 4, then made a

Crane loading a Kuhn animal cage for the trip to Jamaica on December 11, 1962. Art Spellman photo.

385-mile run into the Hugo, Oklahoma winter quarters.

During the summer tour D. R. Miller began making plans to take a winter unit to the West Indies in December. The winter tour was to be in association with veteran horse trainer Jack Joyce. The show was to go by boat and make use of a number of the small wagons used in the 1962 parade. Eddie Kuhn and his wild animal act was signed for the tour.

The November 3, 1962 *Amusement Business* reported: "Final plans are under way for the winter unit's tour of the West Indies and an early opening in 1963."

However the Cuban missile crisis threw a monkey wrench in Miller's plans as *Amusement Business* reported on December 22, 1962: Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus, which had cancelled a December trip to the West Indies due to the Cuban scare, has rescheduled the tour, owner Dory Miller reported.

"Miller said the show would open Christmas Day in Kingston, Jamaica, with other performances planned at Nassau, Barbados, Trinidad and on other islands of the area. The tour will last from six to fourteen weeks, depending on response to the show.

"About 100 employees and performers and a number of animal acts will go with the circus from Hugo. Additional act will join the show in the West Indies."

Miller chartered the 118 by 27 foot *Bahama Venture* to carry the show to the Is-

lands. It was typical of several that carried supplies between West Palm Beach and the Islands. It was quite wide and sat deep in the water when all of the equipment was loaded. Art Spellman, who observed the loading on December 11, reported that after the elephants were put on board the big top center poles were lifted from the dock and lashed to the side. The ticket wagon was loaded next. Miss Oklahoma, the hippo, in his crate, was put on the right side of the ship. Eddie Kuhn's small wild animal cages were then hoisted to the upper deck and lashed down in a crowded area, with one extending over the side slightly. Spellman was on hand when the ship returned to West Palm Beach on January 23 to unload. The six week tour did not materialize, with the show playing only in Jamaica from December 27 to January 13. The equipment and personnel returned to Hugo.

The February 16, 1963 *Amusement Business* reported: "The Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus personnel have returned to Hugo, Oklahoma, winter quarters after an abbreviated trip to the West Indies.

"The show, framed by K-M owner D. R. Miller in association with Jack Joyce, left West Palm Beach on the SS *Bahama Venture* December 12, opening December 27 in Kingston, Jamaica, and closing January 13. Personnel arrived back in West Palm Beach on January 23.

"Business was reported excellent the first two weeks, then slack during mid-week with full closing weekend houses. Side show and pit show did very well, according to Stuart Miller, side show manager.

"Other staff included Keller Pressley, general manager; Eddie Kuhn, menagerie superintendent; Charles Schlarbaum, music director; Don and Lone McIntosh, con-

The K-M ticket wagon just prior to being unloaded after returning from Jamaica on January 23, 1963. Miss Oklamona is looking over the side. Art Spellman photo.



cessions, and Frank Ellis, pit show.

"Acts making the trip were the Paul Jordan high-wire troupe; the Freddie Cannestrelli family; the Geraldos, flying act; Eddie Kuhn's wild animals; Campo Family, trampoline; Vasquez Trio, bar act; Kelly-Miller elephants, presented by Capt. Robert Cline; the Ferraris, perch act; Gerry Pressley, wire act, and clowns Jack and Ruby Landrus, and the Bakers. Side show had Stu Miller magic, Punch and blade box; Stan Marye, fire, swords and anatomical; Shirley Marye, bally and electric; and Ansel Jones bally."

Miller in a surprise move took a fifteen truck show on an eight week tour of south Texas, opening in Harlington on February 9-10. Using the Royal International Circus title the show carried eight elephants, a liberty horse act and several special features. The unit joined the rest of the regular Kelly-Miller equipment when it opened in Hugo on April 13.

Not one to give up, Miller decided to use the Jamaica equipment for a tour of the Canadian maritime providences. He located the *Fleurus*, a ship built in 1926 for the Anticosti Shipping Company of Quebec in France. It ran between Quebec and Sydney, Nova Scotia in its early days. In 1949 she sank at Lauzon, but was pumped out and repaired at a cost of \$200,000 (Canadian). She was later outfitted by the Fraser Shipping Company and then laid idle in Jacksonville, Florida in 1962 and 1963. Miller leased the ship, under Panamanian registry, from the Beach Corporation of Nassau.

Miller knew he needed to make contact with someone in Canada who knew the area and could provide local help. On March 25, 1963 he wrote Fred Phillips, a press agent for circuses and carnivals, in Fredericton, New Brunswick: "We are seriously considering the operation of a circus by ship. By this I mean, that instead of transporting our show by rail or highway, it would be loaded on a ship. It will not be a gilly operation as we are building wagons of a size and shape so that they can be swung aboard the ship and stowed in the hold. However of a necessity this type of show will have to show coastal towns, or so close to the coast as to make them within our reach for a one day show."

"The ship we have in mind will draw approximately 14 feet of water when loaded. We feel with this type of operation we can really get into virgin territory, such as Newfoundland, Labrador etc. We

Al. G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Boat Circus

INCORPORATED



SEA-GOING CIRCUS

POST OFFICE BOX 392
HUGO, OKLAHOMA, U. S. A.

D. R. MILLER, GENERAL MANAGER

Letterhead used by Miller's Canadian boat show in 1963. Pfening Archives.

want to open in Canada around the first of June this year. We feel that we should be able to get a three months season out of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and towns on the St. Lawrence in Quebec and Ontario. Our ship will be able to make a hundred miles a night, but we would rather hold the jumps down under that if at all possible.

"This will not be a big show, but it will be a good one and will be clean. It will primarily be a trained wild animal show. In fact the arena in the center ring will not be sloughed. In it we will present trained lions, lionesses, leopards and wolves, trained bears a leopard riding a zebra, and domestic animal acts. We will have three elephants, so all in all we will make quite a flash on the lot and please our customers with the performance.

"The reason for writing you is to see if you would be interested in being our agent in Canada. If not for full time then perhaps you could assist us with our booker. In either case would appreciate hearing from you, if you are interested quote us what salary you would have to have. We are not against playing more than one day in a town if you think business we would warrant it. Also we can show indoors on occasion. One of the main problems will be dockage. This will be a challenge for a booker, but I feel that you would enjoy it."

Phillips responded that he would work with the show. A conference call was made between Miller, Phillips and Charlie Campbell, the show's agent. On April 8 Phillips wrote Miller: "Charlie Campbell has started to book the towns beginning with Moncton.

"As promised I am sending you a copy of the Canadian Ports and Shipping Directory and a set of maps of the four Atlantic Provinces. The page numbers marked on the maps refer to the permanent listings in the directory.

"Moncton is a good town but I am not optimistic about it for physical reasons.

You cannot consider it as a port and it would be a long haul overland.

"My own idea would be to open in the southwest corner of New Brunswick, right next to eastern Maine. This would probably put you in St. Andrews, St. Stephens, farther up the St. Croix River, might be a better town but you would run into the Bill Lynch Shows.

"There is not much to say about the Nova Scotia towns except that the Bill Lynch Shows are pretty sure to be on the Halifax Common throughout the second half of June.

"About Bill Lynch again, he is quite a force throughout these eastern Provinces and you will encounter him before you go far in any event. It might be a good idea for you to go over to Halifax and have a talk with him. Of course you are a circus and he is carnival. In the past he has been cooperative with Clyde Beatty and with the Cristianis. Also his brother, Jack Lynch, might prove helpful to you. He is a retired ship's captain and, although he now manages one of Bill's smaller units, his heart is really not in it. He might be in a position to make suggestions about a crew.

"Included in today's material is a copy of the Theatres and Amusements Act for New Brunswick. You will be licensed under this act, although you will not get much definite information from reading it. The tax commissioner is a reasonable fellow and I have suggested that Campbell call on him. The District Marine Agent has already proven cooperative, although he does not know what is in prospect. You will need to see him about navigation charts of our eastern coast.

"Now about the ship? Is it diesel or steam? In the former event it might be advisable to make a major hook-up for fuel with the Irving Oil Company, who have a terrific refinery at Saint John.

"Finally, I know you intend to have a press agent to work the immediate towns. However, if I could interest the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in doing a TV short on your enterprise, maybe for national showing, would this have value to you?"

Miller answered Phillip's letter on April

18: "My apologies for the delay in answering, but I have been in and out of town for the past two weeks. I'm snowed under here, too. The show that's touring the states has been having trouble with the advance, the labor and we've had a couple of wrecked trucks to go along with it. My Dad's little show opens tonight and I've also been helping him get things started.

"Many thanks for all the date. That book is priceless. We have it dog-eared already. I certainly appreciate all you've done in obtaining this information for us.

"Our ship is diesel and has steam winches. It has 14 1/2 foot draft, loaded, 210 feet long and 33 feet wide.

"In answer to your last question, concerning the TV short-yes, definitely, we are very interested. We are working on a lead for a series here, with CBS, however if you could get the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation interested, maybe we could work from both ends."

Phillips wrote Miller again on April 17: "Since you seem to plan an entire season in Canada, have you thought of getting your paper printed north of the Border, in that way avoiding customs on advertising material? The job could be done by King Poster Print in Estavan, Saskatchewan.

"Also, since a press agent will pretty much have to start out cold, he could get mats made up here. Best place I know is Moncton Publishers Ltd. in Moncton. I have used them at times when I was doing a press chore for Bill Lynch.

"George Enos, the Provincial Tax Commissioner, was in Fredericton today. I gave him some idea of the probable size of the show and how many days it might play. Although this is not to be taken as a firm commitment, he mentioned a Provincial license around \$100. Of course there will be an amusement tax on the ticket sale in addition to that. Also the trucks would have to have a commercial license in each of the Provinces."

By late April Miller had gone to Jacksonville, Florida, operating from the Seminole Hotel, taking personal control of the preparations of his sea-going enterprise. Miller's niece, Linda Beach, wrote Phillips on April 24: "Eddie Kuhn is playing a date in Billings, Montana, will go from there to Montgomery, Alabama. He has

been going through the port book at night, and has come up with sometowns. Would you forward them on to Charlie [Campbell]?"

"In regards to the printing companies, could we again ask you a favor, would you check on the mats, also if they do picture engraving, and the time required for shipping."

hour and forty-five minutes. With the usual circus acts, clowns, acrobats, trapeze performers, etc.

"We are looking for some Club who is interested in raising money to sponsor this Circus. The sponsor furnishes the circus a lot, around 250 x 300 feet, and the necessary licenses.

"In return they receive 20% of all tickets sold in advance, which we furnish. On circus day they receive 10% of all tickets sold at the circus, for both the matinee and night performances.

"We have our own diesel light plant, we do all the advertising both—press and radio. Put up the window cards in town, and surrounding area.

"As I repeat the Circus arrives by boat, and will dock at your local wharf to unload, and proceed to the Circus Grounds. There the 'Big Top' will be erected, which seats around 1200 people. The unloading at the local dock, will be good advertising for us. Due to the fact that there has never been a Sea-Going Circus here, or any place else.

"Mr. City Official, it would be greatly appreciated if you would give this letter and its contents to some local Club. When I arrive in town, I will first contact you, in order to see who has this letter, and who is interested. At this time I will show the group pictures of the Circus, and go into all the details on same, explaining everything.

"Looking forward to seeing you soon, I remain."

By early April Campbell was in Canada attempting to line up a route. He wrote Phillips from Moncton on April 8: "I talked to Mr. Cunningham at the CN offices this morning.

He was very cooperative in trying to help me solve my problem of transportation.

"The more I get into this thing the deeper it gets. Now to move inland via rail. It is out of the question, the high rates, plus the delay, loading and unloading equipment.

"Mr. Cunningham was so kind as to list all the port towns, where a big boat can be unloaded. Now it looks as if the spot to open would be St. John. This Moncton is out of question, just like you said, can't unload here."

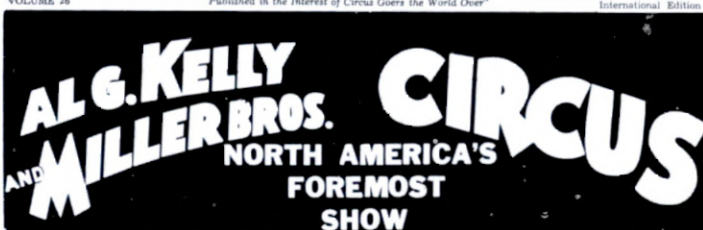
On May 5 Campbell again wrote Phillips: "Well it looks like we will land at Grand Manan, at North Head, unload

The CIRCUS PREVIEW

VOLUME 26

"Published in the Interest of Circus Goers the World Over"

International Edition



Sparkling Beautiful Millerettes
Stars of the Lavishly Costumed Precision Productions

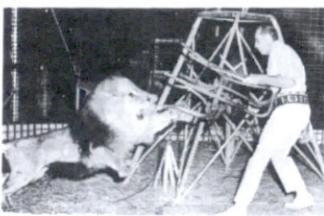
FUN
FOR
ALL
AGES



Death Defying Jordans—on the High Wire
Featuring Carla Wallenda



The Flying Geraldos



Capt. Eddy Kuhn Master of Jungle Beasts

LIMITED ENGAGEMENT
DIRECT FROM
THE UNITED STATES

IN ALL ITS MAGNITUDE AND ENTIRETY

Scores of Wild-Trained Animals and Performers
Under One Huge Canvas Tent

FREE ATTRACTIONS
ON MIDWAY
ONE HOUR BEFORE
EACH
PERFORMANCE

☆
PRICES THE ENTIRE
FAMILY CAN AFFORD.
CHECK YOUR LOCAL
NEWSPAPER FOR
LOW, LOW PRICES

Front of two page herald used for the 1963 boat show. Pfening Archives.

Charlie Campbell, who had been a contracting agent on the 1962 summer tour, was employed as general agent early in the spring of 1963. Prior to going into the area he wrote to mayors and city managers in Nova Scotia. Using a new Al. G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Boat Circus, Inc. letterhead he sent the following letter: "The above Boat Circus is coming your way this Season, we have put your town on our tentative route.

"This is a Sea-Going Circus, featuring four Wild Animal acts, which are presented in a steel arena. Performances runs

and haul to middle of island. Official route: North Head June 1; Digby 3; Yarmouth 4; Shelburne 5; Liverpool 6 is pending. I have Bridgewater set for the 7th, now working here on Lunenburg."

Miller sent Charles V. Turner to work press and radio and assist Campbell in booking. Turner wrote Phillips from Pictou, Nova Scotia on May 15: "Things with the show, as far as they concern me, are the same as when I last saw you. All fouled up. I came up here, on orders to assist Campbell on a job that is absolutely foreign to anything I have previously attempted and was told I was to accompany Charlie for a couple of towns to get some ideas. Instead of that I met up with him on Friday and on Saturday I was at Port Hawkesbury, doing something for which I had no experience or training. Fortunately, I had a lot of luck and closed the contract successfully but, through lack of experience I left a couple of loose ends that I will have to tie up on my return there. On Monday I went to Source, P. E. I. and on Tuesday to Montague. In both places I was again very lucky and closed these contracts."

"I am leaving for Digby tomorrow where I am, supposedly to pick up the advance material, and I hope some instructions and needed information. But, as Campbell has pointed out, I probably won't find a thing. I look forward to talking to Mr. Miller from Digby on Saturday night, but unless there is some effort being made to reorganize this project, I'm afraid I'll have to sever my connections with it."

The route changed quickly. On May 26 Campbell wrote Phillips: "We are only making North Head, N. B. on the way up, other N. B. spots will be made on our return south. The route now is North Head 8; Digby 10; Yarmouth 11; Shelburne 12; Bridgewater 14; Lunenburg 15; Sheet Harbor 17; Canso 18; Petite de Grat 19; Port Hawkesbury 20; Pictou 21; Pugwash 22; Summerside, P. E. I. 24; Charlottetown 25 & 26; Montague 27; Souris 28 and Grindstone, Magdalen Island, Quebec 29."

"We were forced to move all dates back one week, due to difficulties in getting the ship ready at Jacksonville. The above is the official route."

Campbell thought that was the official route. Problems continued with the ship. Campbell wrote Phillips from Yarmouth on June 21: "Just a note to advise we are waiting on the arrival of the boat here, where it will clear customs and immigration."

"Dory called this morning, boat is now enroute from New Jersey to Canada. We expect it here sometime Sunday."

"Of course all dates are to be moved back again, we may still play Grand Manan. Plenty of people were on hand, on

dates billed, but were all disappointed. Hoping we can play the original route, just set the dates back again."

"Several people waiting on boat's arrival here, band arrived off the big show yesterday. Harry Anderson and Linda Beach are here at this hotel."

All was ready in Nova Scotia for the arrival of the big boat circus from the United States.

The June 8, 1963 *Amusement Business* told about the show: "Undaunted by a disappointing voyage to the West Indies this past winter, D. R. Miller launched another seagoing unit of his Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus, May 27, headed for Nova Scotia and then the Bahamas."

"Sailing from Jacksonville, Florida, aboard the 40-year-old 232-foot French freighter *Fleurus* were some 50 animals,

Small handbill used by Kelly-Miller in Canada. The newspaper ads used the same illustration. Pfening Archives.

One Day Only

Coming — Digby

Auspices
FIRE DEPARTMENT
Show Grounds
BALL FIELD



NOTE—This is positively the first and only large Circus ever to be transported from town to town on its own ocean going diesel motored ship. Be at dockside to see this great Circus unload.

3 - Performing Elephants - 3

4 - World Renowned WILD ANIMAL ACTS - 4

Presented in the Steel Arena.
Scores of AEROBATIC and TRAPESE ARTISTS.

CAPT. EDDY
Vast Cages of WILD ANIMALS.

and his MAN-KILLING
Jungle-bred LIONS.

Acres of Tents

ALG. KELLY AND MILLER Bros.



2nd Largest — CIRCUS

One Day Only — 2 Performances · Afternoon & Evening.

including elephants, lions, tigers, bears, zebras, llamas and horses, 45 performers and equipment that included a big top and bleachers.

"Eddie Kuhn, wild animal trainer with the unit, didn't expect to have any trouble with seasick animals. 'They're better sailors than people,' he said. 'No one has ever told an animal he can get seasick, so he doesn't.'"

"The *Fleurus* was converted into a seagoing circus by Beach Properties, Ltd., of Nassau, which bought the ship and reached an agreement with Kelly-Miller for the operation. It had been idle in a shipyard since the McCormick Steamship Co. ended its Miami-to-Cuba runs after the Castro take-over."

Miller advertised in *Amusement Business*: "Wanted for #2 show. Help in all departments. Agent, billers, press agent, side show manager, and side show acts, boss butcher, stand help and seat butchers. All types of acts that double for big show. Musicians and calliope player. Bosses and working men in all departments. Must be willing to leave country. State lowest in first letter. We feed and sleep on our own steamship. Write Kelly-Miller Boat Show, Hugo, Oklahoma."

Early in June this article went out on the Associated Press wire: "Jacksonville, Florida. Hey, Rube, batten down the elephants. The circus is going to sea."

"A gaily painted little freighter named *Fleurus* is being loaded and readied for duty as a floating big top. It is tentatively scheduled to sail on June 1 for villages along the coast of Nova Scotia and later the Bahamas."

"When the forty year old French built vessel sails, she will carry fifty animals including elephants, lions, bears, zebras, llamas, tigers, horses and ponies. Also aboard will be forty-five performers."

"The operation will work just like the old time railroad circus, said D. R. Miller, part owner of the Al G. Kelly and Miller Bros. Circus. 'She'll put into ports along the coast which ordinarily don't have access to a circus."

"We'll unload the animals, set up the big top, the bleachers and the arena and stage the show like the old timers used to. The ship will travel at night and there will be a show in a different town every day," Miller said."

The staff included: D. R. Miller, owner; Mrs. D. R. Miller and Barbara Miller, elephant act; Linda Beach, secretary; Capt. Eddie Kuhn, executive manager and wild animal act; Harry Anderson, assistant manager; King Charles, band leader; Frank Perez, concession manager; Jack Arnott, press agent; Jack Smith, office manager; Charlie Campbell, contracting agent; and Jack Fulton, superintendent;

Tommy Harris, assistant superintendent; Carl Goodwin, electrician; Don and Leota Caspers, elephant handlers.

Performers included: Charlene Kuhn, bear act; Donnie Carr, Lotia Perez, wire act; Bill and Bernie Nippo, clowns; Bob Dawson and Mike Van Horn, trampoline and bar acts; Linda Shearer, Mark Carroll and Ty Gregory, perch pole and casting acts. Five University of Florida students on vacation went along working for their passage.

The first stand was to be North Head, New Brunswick on June 1. Yarmouth was booked for June 4. The tour's bad luck began at once. The June 1 sailing from Jacksonville, Florida was delayed a day after an elephant and two ponies got loose before boarding. A few hundred yards from shore the steering mechanism broke down and the boat laid in the water until repairs could be made.

On June 4 the *Fleurus* again headed out to sea. Twenty-one hours later a piston cracked, the radio went dead and the refrigeration system quit, causing the meat supply to spoil. Following three days adrift the ship was spotted by a rescue plane and a tug was sent out to tow the boat to Charleston, South Carolina. After a three day over-haul the *Fleurus* headed again for Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

The boat took five weeks to reach Yarmouth, nearly three weeks behind the show's paper. Finally arriving on June 24, the show unloaded and gave two performances for the fire department in Yarmouth on June 25.

Early the next morning the show was nearly loaded and about to sail for the second stand in Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Bad luck struck again when a fire broke out in the ship's engine room. A fire alarm was sounded at once. Two fire trucks arrived at the dock and firemen ran water lines to the engine room. Two additional fire trucks arrived as backups with a total of 135 firemen fighting the blaze. With the help of the tide and the ship's listing to starboard heavy planks were laid between the ship and the dock. The three elephants were walked off the ship. A nearby crane was moved from a near by wharf which lifted off all of Eddie Kuhn's cages. The ship, heavy with

water, began listing badly, making the rescue difficult. Show employees along with a local veterinarian worked together in getting the ponies, horses, zebras and dogs off the *Fleurus*. The horses and ponies were taken to a nearby farmer's pasture and the wagons were hauled back to the show grounds used the prior day.

The old ship finally settled to the bottom of the harbor as a Bramha bull and pony swan to the shore. The only loss of life was a zebra, still in the hold, which drowned.

The show lost two large wagons, the big top, the ticket wagon, harnesses and saddles. Yarmouth officials set the loss of the vessel and personal belongings between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

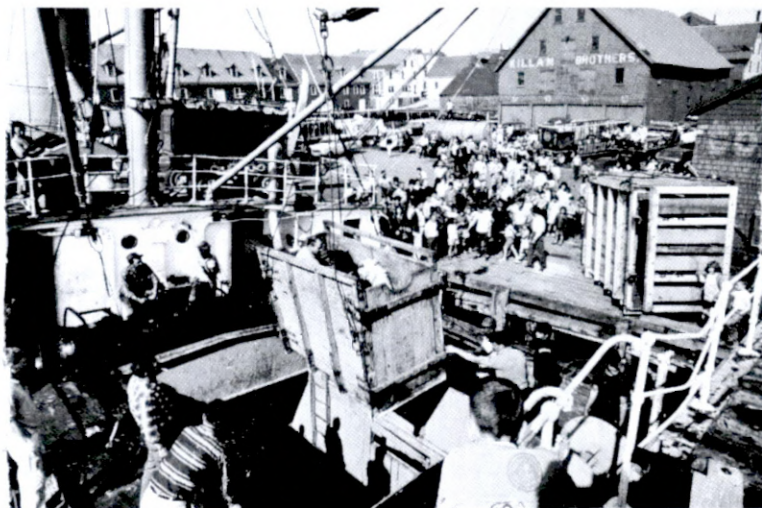
The July 6 *Amusement Business* reported: "K-M's Canada circus boat blazes, sinks. The Maritimes tour of Kelly-Miller

These photos showing the Kelly-Miller boat in Yarmouth before the fire appeared in the July 20, 1963 *Amusement Business*.

First Circus Ship to N.S. Also Sank



Arrival—Canadian crowds greet Kelly-Miller ship for its opening date.



Circus seemingly ended the day it started, as its 200-foot boat caught fire and sank in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, harbor. Yarmouth was the opening spot. The show made a matinee and night show Tuesday (25), then reloaded. Fire broke out in the engine room at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Trouble dogged Dory Miller's venture, reportedly a \$150,000 effort, from the time the boat left Jacksonville, Florida. Enroute north it had to be towed in at Charleston, South Carolina, and Cape May, New Jersey.

"The boat was weeks behind its paper when it arrived, and this hurt the turnout. It was listing when it came in, apparently due to a bilge pump failure. (Later on, with nine hoses being used, the added water increased the list.) Unloading at this first Canadian date took all night and part of the afternoon, and the matinee went off at 4 p.m. Exhibition grounds are a mile and a half from the dock.

"Two performances were lightly attended, and in an all-night project the equipment then was reloaded. Fire appar-

ently spread to the bunkers and all apparatus in town was brought to play. Although the blaze was contained, water started filling the hold. Elephants and other animals were walked off, and Eddie Kuhn's wild-animal cages were hoisted to safety. In the hold were a white stallion, Brahma bull and a zebra, which swam out the hatch. Tent, seats, poles and motorized equipment were saved.

"In two hours' time the deck railing was under water. Then, surprisingly, the craft righted itself and slid to the bottom. At high tides the superstructure is visible; at low time the deck line is clear. High coastal tides had hindered the original unloading on Monday.

"Red Cross and Civil Defense agencies cared for the 60-80 circus people. Miller was inquiring about continuing overland if trucks could be obtained. There is no word on whether the damage is covered by insurance."

Amusement Business reported on July 13: "Bids were taken last week to re-float the Kelly-Miller Circus ship *Fleurus*, which rests on the harbor bottom at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, after a June 26 fire. A ben-

efit show to raise spending money for the showfolk was held June 28 at Legion Hall, organized by local businessman Clyde Robbins Jr.

"Dory Miller sent the menagerie and side show 47 miles away to Weymouth for a Dominion Day (July 1) celebration, using six trucks sent to Yarmouth by the sponsoring Weymouth Kiwanis Club. There is no decision as to the fate of the circus. Much depends on the condition of equipment still aboard the *Fleurus*. At low tide each day, crews remove whatever they can. High tide is 37 feet deep at the end of the pier.

"Capt. Eddie Kuhn, lion trainer and executive manager of the unit, said the fire started when the fuel line burst. Contrary to early reports there were losses, as follows: Two wagons, ticket wagon, three power plants, harness, saddles, tackle, wardrobe, animal food, personal belonging. One animal, the zebra, was drowned.

"People working at the risk of their safety suffered injuries. Two men were bitten while moving the leopard to safety. Another got a cracked rib when kicked by a horse which panicked in the hold. They were treated at Yarmouth Hospital and released immediately. Show ponies were taken to a local pasture, other animals were taken to the fairgrounds.

"Whether another boat can be obtained or whether trucks can be gotten for continuing the route, is undecided. Most showfolk said they would stay with it until it gets moving again."

Kuhn provided this report in the July 27 *Amusement Business*: "Apparently undaunted by its sunken ship and a string of bad luck, the Kelly-Miller circus unit has shifted to trucks and cars to continue its tour of Canada's Maritime Provinces.

"Eddie Kuhn, executive manager and lion trainer, reported that a trucking company had contracted to move the show's 42 animals throughout the Canadian tour, expected to last until mid-September. The 35 performers will travel by car.

"Kuhn said most of the equipment that went down with the freighter has been recovered but he was unable to give a salvage estimate. The converted ship was to be refloated last week to determine the cause of fire, which Kuhn said began when the fuel line burst as the show was preparing to leave Yarmouth on June 26.

"We are going to continue," he said, "even though it's going to be a bit unhandy using trucks."

The effort to remove additional equipment continued until at least July 6. By July 12 the ship had been refloated and moved to the upper part of Yarmouth harbor. The insurance company hired the Partridge Motor Boat Service of Halifax to



The *Fleurus* on fire in Yarmouth harbor. The calliope wagon is about to fall off. Pfenig Archives.

do the job. After a week of preparation, during which the port holes were closed and other repairs were made the refloating operations began at 8 a.m. and by 3 p.m. the vessel was taken in tow by three small boats.

The *Fleurus* was too far gone to be rebuilt again. It remained in Yarmouth until October 1963 when it was towed 150 miles to sea and dynamited and sent to the bottom.

In an attempt to re-coop some money while still in Yarmouth a two day stand was advertised for July 5 and 6 on the same Yarmouth Exhibition Grounds lot. A newspaper ad stated that the special prices for Yarmouth were \$1 for adults and fifty cents for children.

The matinee on July 5 drew eighty-nine adults and forty-three children. Forty-eight reserve seats were sold at fifty cents each.

The daily wagon statement told the sad story of a second try in Yarmouth. Income for the day was: adult tickets, \$89; children, \$21; reserves, \$24; side show tickets, \$4.50 (eighteen tickets at twenty-five cents each); pit show, \$1 (ten people at ten cents each); and pony ride, \$2.50.

The show reorganized and opened again in Shelburne on July 10 and played Liverpool the next day. Kelly-Miller then played Bridgewater, July 12-13; Sheet Harbor, July 15; en-route, July 16; Canso, July 17; Port Hawkesbury, July 18; Petit de Grat, July 19; Mulgrove, July 20; Montague, July 22; Souris, July 23; Charlottetown, July 24-25; Summerside, July 26; and closed in Alberton on July 27. Campbell wrote to Phillips on July 7 listing the above dates, plus Sackville, New Brunswick, July 29; Pugwash, N. S., 30; Parrsboro, 31; River Hebert, August 1; and Amherst, 2 and 3.

Campbell wrote office manager Jack

Smith on July 20 from Sackville, New Brunswick: "Below is the official route to bill, had to switch it around a bit in order to get these towns fit in. Amherst is out.

"July 29, River Herbert for the fire department.

"July 30, Parrsboro for the fire department.

"July 31, Pugwash for the fire department.

"Newfoundland is out. I am setting the following week on Prince Edward Island and will then return to the show.

"Expecting to see you soon, I think now that the seats falling in Port Hawkesbury knocked me out of Amhurst, they read it in the paper the next day."

None of these additional dates were played as the show had closed on July 27.

With slow business the tour was ended. Later reports suggest that the show did not make the nut at any Canadian stand.

When the show played Montague on July 22. The Charlottetown *Guardian* reported: "Seven trucks of the fleet of eleven carrying the Kelly-Miller Circus were slowly streaming into Montague last night.

"The work of unloading the animals from the trucks was being watched by a large number of children and grown-ups.

"The circus which saw its ship burn and sink in Yarmouth harbor last month is now traveling by road transport. It arrived in Caribou, Nova Scotia yesterday [July 21] at noon and up until the last crossing of the Northumberland Ferries last night, only seven of the eleven trucks had been ferried over. A bus and several cars carrying the circus performers and crew also crossed yesterday.

"The office wagon and three trucks carrying the elephants and lions are expected to be ferried over on the first trip in the morning. The circus is slated to hold its matinee show in the afternoon and a second is scheduled for the evening.

"The first animals off the trucks in Montague last evening, Shetland ponies, hors-



A Kelly-Miller cage being placed on the King Reid carnival midway at the Skowhegan, Maine fair in August 1963. Dick Bronson photo.

es, a llama and zebu, were happily chomping hay in the field in which the circus is to be held."

Campbell and Miller went to Moncton, New Brunswick, where the King Reid carnival was playing, to hold discussions to place the Kelly-Miller animals on that show. Campbell visited the carnival again a week later in Woodstock, New Brunswick and a deal was made to play Reid's route of fairs including Rutland, Vermont.

The August 10 *Amusement Business* reported that Eddie and Charlene Kuhn's lion and bear act were to work as a free midway attraction. The three elephants, staked out on the midway, were also to do a free act. The K-M menagerie tent added 120 additional feet to the carnival midway. The K-M side show band went along and augmented Reid's musical crew in the minstrel show.

Canadian newspapers made a big event of out the deal, using "the show must go on" angle. Reid reported the equipment

The Kelly-Miller calliope wagon and a cage on a flatbed trailer after arriving on a fairground lot of the Reid carnival. Dick Bronson photo.



arrived in good condition. AB quoted Reid as saying: "There wasn't a complaint from any of the circus folks about being stranded. They all think the boat tour was a terrific idea and they'd gladly try it again." AB noted that it was understood other personnel on the tour would rejoin the main Kelly-Miller show then playing Wisconsin. Following the close of the carnival dates the remaining equipment was sent to the main show.

The September 14 *Amusement Business* told of Miller's additional problems: "It's been a rough year for D. R. Miller, owner of Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus.

"The show itself was plagued by a disappointing early-spring tour, an elephant 'stampede' and the sinking of its 'show-boat' on a projected tour of Canada's Maritime provinces.

"Miller was hit by a government tax suit and recently added a plane crash and burglary to his list of troubles. Arriving home in Hugo, Oklahoma on August 19 he revealed his private plane crashed on August 15 near Mountain View, Arkansas. Nobody was injured, but the plane was damaged to such extent that Miller was forced to charter another to continue his trips with the show.

"On August 20 he reported to police that between \$800 and \$900—along with his trousers—was stolen from his motel room the previous night. He said he had forgotten to lock the door."

In January 1964 Fred Phillips wrote Charles Turner about what happened after the show closed: "What a ram-tam it all turned out to be from this position. You know in a general way what happened. The abortive voyage of the *Fleurus*, the break-downs, the emergency landings, the final arrival away behind schedule, and Dory and a group flying in here in their private plane just as the ship is floundering around at sea.

"Meanwhile a guy named Correz had brought a group of agents for his concessions to Grand Manan Island, thinking that the circus would open there. Poor guy was on the phone to me every day for a week. No doubt his agents were getting hot.

"But instead of that the *Fleurus* finally lands in

Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, they give one performance, then she burns up and sinks.

"Now here is the aftermath. The revamped outfit later leases trucks and buses, plays out the Nova Scotia route and also the five dates on Prince Edward Island. At the end of that it just grinds to a halt.

"Only at that time the King Reid Shows are finishing a week in Moncton. So the whole circus joins out on the midway, using the elephants and lions as free acts, the other animals for a walk-through, and sending the performers back to the States.

"First stand under the new arrangements is at the Old Home Week at Woodstock, New Brunswick. On Monday morning I get a call from the OHW manager who said that 'Reid wanted me to see what I could do.' I said yea, and that I was not much interested. I had not seen the show, I had no stories, no mats as far as Reid knew, no advance notice and no advertising support. Anyway I took it on, landing pictures for two days and a story the third.

"On Saturday evening I went up to Woodstock with the local fair manager and Dory flew in from his No. 1 show just about the same time. To my surprise both Reid and Miller sprang for the full amount and I went back home pressing a bale of hay."

Soon after it closed, Dory Miller had these comments on the boat show: "The circus was intact but we could not move it. Only two of our vehicles were self propelled. The rest were tow units designed to be shuttled back and forth from ship to shore by the two trucks. Meanwhile we did play a day in Weymouth on Dominion Day and gradually shook down on a course of action. We decided to get some trucks and buses and try to fill the dates that Charlie Campbell had contracted.

"We made a string of small places around the Nova Scotia coast, then finished Prince Edward Island at Summerside. But it was no use. You just can't get circus rigs in this country and you can't remodel ordinary trucks over night. Everything we use pretty nearly has to be custom-made. At Summerside we'd just plain had it, physically and financially. But the fortunate coincidence of King Reid's playing at nearby Moncton has provided a way for us to remain in the amusement business."

A final note on Miller's shows appeared in the November 9, 1963 *Amusement Business*: "D. R. Miller, owner of the Al G. Kelly-Miller Bros. Circus, has confirmed that the show will not winter in Hugo, Oklahoma, for the first time since 1941. Three Gulf Coast cities have submitted invitations and a decision was expected shortly. The show closed the 1963 season



Kelly-Miller banners and menagerie tent on King Reid show. Dick Bronson photo.

Thursday (31) at Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

"Miller said, however, that Hugo would remain circus headquarters and that the show was not displeased with the city. The move south will allow the circus to have indoor performance facilities which will help defray the high cost of wintering, estimated at \$50,000 to \$60,000.

"The move was described as a one year trial plan, but is expected to cost Hugo an estimated \$200,000 in business annually. Miller is reportedly maintaining his home and properties in Hugo and a number of performers are expected to go back since

they have their own homes there.

"Its 28th season has been termed 'good' from a financial standpoint, but Kelly-Miller has had its share of trouble. A late winter tour through Texas was disappointing and a trip by ship to the Maritime Provinces of Canada ended with a fire almost before it began."

Material for this article was provided by John Polacsek, Ted Bowman, Art Spellman. Dick Bronson, the Firefighters Museum of Nova Scotia and the Circus World Museum. Al Stencell provided extensive material from the Fred Phillips papers.

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The principal focus of this article is the 1937 Howe Bros. Circus, the last of the Tom Atkinson shows. We will, however, take a brief look at his career in show business. Research has not discovered any biographical material on him. Even his obituary in the *Billboard* following his death in 1938 was brief, omitting his age, date and place of birth, and even a summary of his life in show business. C. G. Sturtevant's *Who's Who In the Circus* doesn't mention

Atkinson in any category but does include his shows in the yearly circus listings. So we are left with only bits and pieces of information from the *Billboard*, *Circus Magazine*, some advertising material, and a few photos to record Atkinson's story.

Thomas A. Atkinson, according to the 1927 *Circus Magazine*, began his career in Michigan with a small wagon show 15 years earlier. A photo of him in the same publication pictures a man probably in his mid-late 30s, probably born about 1890. Atkinson's speciality was training and working domestic animals, dogs, ponies, horses, and monkeys, and in 1928 he worked caged wild animals on the Downie Bros. Circus. His skill in handling animals was similar to several other circus owners of his time, to name a couple, Bud Anderson and Obert Miller. Atkinson fielded well documented shows in period 1921-37 that travelled initially overland by horse and later by truck. He toured one season with a backend show on a large railroad carnival, and once opened a short lived gilly type railroad outfit. Atkinson's shows travelled from coast to coast, played at times in Mexico, and at least twice visited the Hawaiian Islands.

The March 18, 1916 *Billboard* mentions Atkinson as owner-manager of a show bearing his name. The Sturtevant files first list an Atkinson show in 1921. Records show him at times as sole owner of his own outfit, in partnership with others, managing shows for others, and at least one season, as a performer only with a circus.

The October 22, 1921 *Billboard* reported Tom Atkinson's Circus was playing to very good business in Georgia, according to Prince Elmer, press representative. It was reported that Atkinson had just purchased a beautiful Arabian menage horse, and a bucking mule. Mrs. Ethel Atkinson had six of the best military ponies, and a clever dog and monkey act. Prince Elmer worked a January mule routine. The show was being enlarged for a winter tour of Georgia and Florida. Personnel

HOWE BROS. CIRCUS 1937 AND OTHER TOM ATKINSON SHOWS By Joseph T. Bradbury

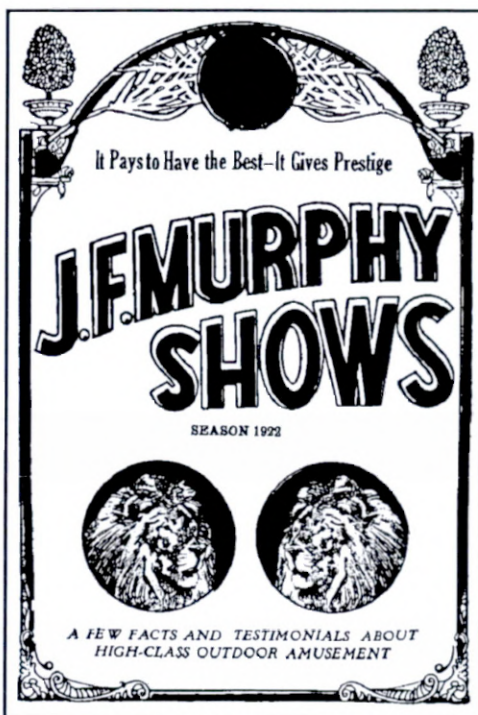
listed were Tom Atkinson, manager; Ethel Atkinson, secretary-treasurer; Ray O'Wesney, equestrian director; Pop Atkinson, boss hostler; and Prince Elmer, producing clown with two assistants.

Prince Elmer was billed as a 32 inch tall midget and was with Atkinson for a number of seasons. The Pop Atkinson, listed as boss hostler, has not been conclusively identified but probably was Tom's father.

Christmas Eve, 1921, found the show at Dowling Park, Florida where it gave a free performance for 196 children at an orphan's home.

Still on the road in Florida when 1922 rolled around, the show ran into bad weather and lost six performances in the period from January 23 to February 1. About this time it was announced that At-

Booklet published by the 25 car Murphy carnival in 1922. Pfening Archives.



kinson had signed a contract to present a backend show for the 1922 season with the J. F. Murphy Shows, a fairly large railroad carnival. The March 4, 1922 *Billboard* said Atkinson had closed his wagon show and sold all of his baggage stock. The wagons were stored in St. Augustine. Scenery was made for the dog and monkey village to be presented on the carnival. How Atkinson's equipment was loaded on the show's flat cars was not noted. Large railroad show

wagons were probably utilized, either owned by Atkinson or the Murphy carnival.

The Murphy carnival opened the 1922 season at Greenville, South Carolina, week of March 6. The *Billboard* reported fair business was done by Atkinson's Dog and Pony Show. It was said to have an excellent electric front made by Capt. Fred Delvey. A shipment of plumes for Mrs. Atkinson's military ponies had arrived. Pop Atkinson was looking after Mrs. Atkinson's spotted horse, Dixie Dan. Other notes said Atkinson's show then had 15 head of stock, including the bucking mule, a pony, and liberty and high school horses. This number was said to be in addition to the parade stock. Possibly other equines were on hand for that purpose, but it is doubtful. Carnivals in those days often paraded and no doubt Atkinson's stock joined the march utilizing his regular performing animals. J. E. Ogden was listed as manager of Atkinson's show while with Murphy.

In mid October Atkinson told the *Billboard* he was adding new equipment and planned to tour the West coast during the winter. A new three car circus was planned, which would be a railroad gilly type. Also noted was a report that Atkinson's show had toured the just completed 1922 season with the Snapp Bros. Shows, railroad carnival. If this is true, then evidently at some point during the season Atkinson moved his show from the Murphy carnival to Snapp Bros.

The December 23, 1922 *Billboard* reported that Atkinson was in the Los Angeles area and provided a show to open a new salesroom for Paul G. Hoffman & Co. in Hollywood. It included Mrs. Atkinson and Dixie Dan; Prince Elmer, the midget; comedy January act; Mike Braham, posing horse and performing mule; Mrs. Atkinson's four military ponies; riding dog and monkey by George King; Gunpowder the bucking mule worked by Walter Terrel; Prof. Gordon's roping and other acts; and Tom Atkinson and his big

dog and monkey act (12 dogs and 6 Rhesus monkeys).

The January 13, 1923 *Billboard* in a piece dated Los Angeles, January 3, reported that Tom Atkinson, owner of Atkinson's Dog, Pony, and Monkey Circus, purchased two beautiful spotted Arabian Shetland ponies and Maud, a kicking and bucking mule. It also mentioned that the one car Great Western Dog and Pony Show was being framed by Atkinson. (Earlier plan had called for a three car show.) Evidently he had already been acquiring rail equipment as it mentioned while Mrs. Atkinson was in San Francisco visiting her mother, Tom had spent the recent holidays in his private car, the Detroit.

A separate article in the same issue said that after working in a Jackie Coogan movie Tom Atkinson and Mike Braham had moved into their new winter quarters at 728 Grandview Street, Los Angeles, where they had fixed up two rings to train stock. Atkinson expected to take to road with a one car circus in about six weeks.

The new railer soon closed as the May 19, 1923 *Billboard* said Atkinson had reopened his show under his own name. Two weeks later the trade publication gave additional details, saying the show was traveling on trucks and moving nicely. Playing in and around Los Angeles Tom Atkinson's Dog, Pony, and Monkey Circus found fair business. Nahoe, California, May 15, was good. Atkinson visited the Goldwyn Studio at Culver City and returned with a new living wagon (trailer) for Mrs. Atkinson. Prince Elmer was operating the side show.

Atkinson was close to several movie studios and is believed to have provided animals and a circus setting for a number of films. In the mid 1930s *Circus Magazine* listed five or six movies on which Atkinson show equipment, animals and personnel were used. The Jackie Coogan movie was not identified, but he appeared in several circus themed full length movies or shorts, the best known of which was *Peck's Bad Boy*.

At some point during the 1923 season Atkinson used the Daly Bros. Circus title for the first time, a moniker he would again use in 1927. The *Billboard* thoroughly covered activities of the show throughout the season. It played extensively in California and at times made long jumps. In August the show moved into the San Joaquin Valley and in September played the San Luis Obispo fair. It was mentioned that Atkinson was continually adding new equipment, in reality building up his first motorized show. A new cookhouse and two more trucks were added in October. In November the show purchased a roadster in Los Angeles for

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Daly Bros Circus herald used by Atkinson in 1927. Circus World Museum collection.

the new advance agent, Pete Collender, plus rigging and harness equipment for a new riding number with Prince Elmer. The November 17 *Billboard* said the show was giving parades and paraded through the Great Sababa Indian reservation, providing great entertainment for the residents.

It was reported in early December that Atkinson had a new four wheel cage trailer with compartments for 20 monkeys. Other cages were to be shipped as soon as completed to Harry Melville who was in charge of the show's quarters in San Francisco on land recently leased by Atkinson. It was noted the show made its first visit to Mexico following a 105 mile jump from Seeley, California to Tecate. It appears this was the first time the show had ventured out of California after being motor-

ized. Some towns originally booked in Arizona were cancelled. Later in December reports indicated the show was playing the larger towns in and around Los Angeles

The December 29 *Billboard* reported Atkinson had signed contracts with Eddie Fernando (probably E. K. Fernandez) of Honolulu to be the attraction at a big Elks celebration there early in January 1924. The show was to leave by ship from San Pedro on December 26. The entire company plus Manuel Marcious, Spanish wire walker, and the Artez troupe of acrobats were to make the trip.

Following the Hawaiian engagement it is assumed the show went to its new quarters in San Francisco. Atkinson had said he planned to acquire an elephant in 1924 but there is no evidence he did.

For the 1924, 1925, and 1926 seasons Atkinson toured his show under his own title, according to Sturtevant's lists. In 1927 he used the title of Daly Bros. Circus. (Note difference in spelling from Ben Davenport's more familiar Dailey Bros. which toured from the late 1930s to 1950.) Following the end of the 1927 season Atkinson sold his show. To whom has not been determined, nor the reasons for the sale although they were probably financial. Perhaps, too, he just wanted to get away from the responsibility of operating a small-medium fifteen truck outfit.

In 1928 Atkinson and his wife, Ethel, were with the Andrew Downie's Downie Bros. Circus which since its start in 1926 had become the largest and most successful motorized show on the road. The Downie 1928 program had Atkinson working two cage numbers, trained leopards, and a mixed animal act including lions. Trained goats and dogs were presented by Ethel Anderson, and she also worked the single elephant number with a Miss Mary. The Atkinsons were with Downie but one season, then made other arrangements for 1929.

The March 9, 1929 *Billboard* said that Atkinson had taken over the management of the Robinson Bros. Circus. The show was transported on 16 trucks and was expected to open the first of April. It wintered in Nixon, Texas.

Three months later, the June 8 *Billboard* reported the Robinson Bros. Circus was in its twelfth week and had enjoyed excellent business through Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado.

An interesting item also appearing in the *Billboard* in the spring of 1929 said that the elephant, Maxine, owned by W. C. Richards, was currently on his Richard Bros. Circus. Maxine later became the first elephant on an Atkinson owned show in 1935.

In mid summer tragedy struck the Robinson Bros. Circus. The July 28 *Billboard*

said that Bert Robinson of the show was attacked and bitten by a big male lion while working the lion act during the night performance in Victor, Idaho. He was taken to the Rexburg hospital for treatment, but died shortly afterward. Internment was in that city. Earlier the *Billboard* had said Robinson Bros. was moving on 20 trucks. The big top was a 70 with three 30s, and one 20. This size was probably to accommodate the steel arena which could remain up without dismantling between performances. The performance was presented in two rings and the steel arena.

Shortly after the death of Bert Robinson it was reported the show was playing to good business in Montana. There were no further accounts of Robinson Bros. until the March 15, 1930 *Billboard* when a piece dated Hynes, California, March 8, said the widow of Bert Robinson had sold the show to C. C. "Penny" Parker and L. C. Sanford, both old time showmen. Sanford had been out of show business for some time. The outfit was to be transported on 12 trucks and 2 trailers, carrying 12 head of horses and ponies, 2 trick mules, 5 trained lions, 18 dogs, all working in various acts. The big top was a 70 x 120; side shows, 40 x 60 and 30 x 50. Robinson Bros. was to open about March 20 and parades were to be given. Atkinson continued as manager under the new ownership, but left the show early in the 1930 tour.

After leaving the show Atkinson joined Gutierrez Bros. Circus. He reported in the June 21 *Billboard* that the show had excellent business during a 30 day tour in Mexico. Gutierrez Bros. traveled on nine trucks and five trailers. The big top was an 80 with two 40s. The performance was given in one ring and a stage. It was strictly a Mexican show, seating 2,000 people and playing three day and week long stands. One performance was given daily with the program changing every night. The show carried no side show and did not parade. Seventy people were with it.

The December 13 *Billboard* reported Gutierrez Bros. Circus returned to California from Mexico and had fair business through the Imperial Valley.

Although no details were given it is believed Atkinson provided a number of acts for the shows he managed in 1930. In February of that year it was reported from Los Angeles that he had purchased a dog, pony, goat, and monkey act. He also bought a rosinback horse from Stick Davenport. It is not known if Atkinson owned a part the Gutierrez show. However in 1931 he again was ready to put out his own show.

The March 7, 1931 *Billboard* in a piece dated Venice, California, February 28,

stated that Circo Valencia, owned and managed by Atkinson, would soon take to the road. It was to be transported on twelve trucks and six trailers. The big top was to be a 70 with a 30 foot middle with two rings and a stage. This may have possibly been a misprint as the top had to have had more than one middle piece. The show was to have an eight piece Mexican band and a calliope. A parade was to be given. Mrs. Ethel Atkinson was to

Tom Atkinson's show as pictured in the 1927 *Circus Magazine*. Pfening Archives.

be treasurer and auditor. The show was to head for the Imperial Valley to catch the lettuce harvest.

Two months later a note in the May 9 *Billboard* indicated that Atkinson may have taken on a partner. It reported Circo Valencia, under the management of Tom Atkinson and R. H. Hartman, reported fair business. The show enlarged at Miami, Arizona, adding a platform snake show. The show planned to play New Mexico for the following eight to ten weeks, then move on to Colorado. Mono Gutierrez and his wife were scheduled to



Some of the ponies with the show



*Prince Elmer-
feature clown with the show*



*Tom Atkinson
& three of his
little actors*



*Miss Ethel Atkinson
and her highschool horse Dixie Dan*



*Prince Elmer
Feature clown with Tom Atkinson's Circus*

The Four Monkey Outlaws



Design used on an Atkinson envelope in early 1930s. Pfening Archives.

join shortly to strengthen the band and big show.

In June the show reported that business was good in New Mexico and that another Chevrolet had been added, bringing the fleet to ten.

In September it was reported that Prince Elmer had joined Valencia after a four year absence from Atkinson. The *Billboard* said the show was jumping from Albuquerque, New Mexico to Los Angeles preparatory to taking it to Honolulu. Atkinson advised truck shows headed for New Mexico to watch out for the automobile tax and a state license of \$ 100.00 a day for playing any unincorporated town.

The show left by boat for the Hawaiian Islands on September 26, 1931 to play an extended engagement for the noted circus impresario, E. K. Fernandez.

The January 23, 1932 *Billboard* said that Tom Atkinson's Mexican Circus was playing two and three day stands on the island of Oahu. It would remain on that island several more weeks before moving to Kamutu island.

Atkinson left Hawaii for the mainland on the *City Of Los Angeles* on July 30, 1932. An announcement was made that the show might return to Hawaii in October to play the Maui Fair.

Shortly after the return to the United States the show, using the Circo Valencia title, hit the road. Prince Elmer was still with it as it began touring California. In September the *Billboard* said the show was playing one and two day stands in the southern part of the state, and would be at the Pomona Fair, September 16-25. Ethel Atkinson had added a wire walking Mexican Chihuahua to her dog act.

Prince Elmer wrote in the October 22 *Billboard* that he was then in quarters with Circo Valencia located at the end of Brooklyn Avenue in Los Angeles. A month later three shows were wintering at the Atkinson quarters, Circo Valencia, Gutierrez Bros. Mexican Circus, and Covington & Sons. The great depression

which had begun in October 1929 hit rock bottom in July of 1932. Hardest hit were the larger railroad shows and some motorized circuses faltered. The small to medium shows such as Atkinson's seemed to weather the depression better than others.

During the early months of 1933 Atkinson's equipment and animals as well as some personnel were used in movie work at the nearby studios. When the season began Atkinson used his own name for the first time since 1926.

The May 27, 1933 *Billboard* gave a few details of the show: "After filming work for the movies in North Hollywood the Tom Atkinson show hit the trail. Weather has been miserable and it is necessary to play indoors at some spots. The show was forced to double back south as the new Nevada law makes it prohibitive there. Shows must pay \$20 for each truck and trailer if only passing through Nevada.

"Program includes, dogs, ponies, and xylophone by Miss Brownnee Atkinson; goats and clown numbers, Gladstone (Doc) Atkinson; Teenie McQue, web, rope, ladders; McNamara, calliope and banjo; Tom Atkinson, dogs and ponies. Staff: Tom Atkinson, owner; Mrs. Ethel Atkinson, secretary-treasurer; Doc Atkinson, superintendent and manager; Al Goldenberry, privileges and banners; Mickie Robinson, concessions; Ralph McNaire and two men on advance. Outfit moves on eleven trucks."

In early 1934 Tom Atkinson and E. J. McCollister became partners in a show titled Star Bros. Circus. The May 26, 1934 *Billboard* told about the show in an article dated Springfield, Missouri, May 15, which said that Star Bros. Circus was then in its third week. It had opened in North Little Rock, Arkansas to fair business, made a few Arkansas towns, then went into Tennessee where it encountered nice spring weather. Most of the towns were up to expectations from a business standpoint. The show moved rapidly and trucks and other equipment were in good condition.

The performance was presented in two rings and on a stage in an 80 with three 30s big top. The side show-menagerie was a 50 with two 30s. All canvas was practically new. The side show had an all new bannerline. Atkinson served as lot superintendent, and McCollister was treasurer. Mrs. McCollister was auditor and Jimmy Dunn, side show manager. Dogs, ponies, aerial, ground acts, and a few trained animal acts filled the one and a half hour program. Capt. Tiger Driesbeck presented a wild animal act. Montana Earl had the wild west concert.

Nothing further appeared in the trade publication regarding Star Bros. until late in the year. An advertisement in the No-

vember 24, 1934 *Billboard* wanted performers, principal clowns with props, animal acts, musicians, side show people, butchers, pony boy and workingmen. The cookhouse was to open on November 23 in Provencal, Louisiana.

The following issue reported McCollister and Atkinson had dissolved their partnership and that the former was then the sole owner of Star Bros. The performance was the same standard that the show had always maintained and business continued to be good. The circus was to be on the road all winter.

Details of the partnership between At-

Herald used by Star Bros. Circus in 1934. Pfening Archives.

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kinson and McCollister and the terms of the dissolution are not known to the author, but it appears McCollister ended up with the equipment. Atkinson didn't need the equipment and this was explained in the December 29, 1934 *Billboard*: "Billy Dick stated that Tom Atkinson, who recently severed his connection with Star Bros., has joined forces with John D. Foss, late of Seal Bros. Circus, in purchasing the Duggan Bros. outfit from W. F. Duggan Sr. Organization is called Barney Bros. Wild Animal Circus. The show has an 80 foot big top with three 30s; menagerie is a 50 with one 30, and side show is 40 with two 30s. Show moves on fifteen trucks which have been repainted white and lettered in blue and gold. Staff: John D. Foss, general agent with 3 men; Tom Atkinson, manager; Brownie Atkinson, secretary-treasurer. The show opened at Provencal, Louisiana and will stay out as long as weather permits. New canvas has been ordered for spring. Roy Haag was legal adjuster and Ralph Noble, general superintendent."

After a few weeks on the road the new Barney Bros. closed and got ready for the full 1935 season. Foss and Atkinson made a good team and for the next two seasons the show was by far the largest and had the most complete and balanced performance of any circus previously owned or managed by Atkinson. A major addition was the acquisition of an elephant in 1935, the first ever for an Atkinson show. Leased from W. C. Richards was the Asiatic female Maxine. This was the first elephant owned by Richards, purchased during the winter of 1925-26. Maxine served on Richard's own show and in 1933 and on William Ketrow's Kay Bros. circus. In 1934 the elephant was on Miliken Bros. Circus and in 1935 and 1936 on Barney Bros. Chang Reynolds' elephant notes state that Tex McRorey remembered seeing Maxine on Barney Bros. at Visalia, California in the fall of 1936. He said he thought she was a dwarf due to her small size.

In 1936 Barney Bros. was essentially the same size as 1935 and the season was fairly good. No details are being given on these two seasons as those years are a possible candidate for a separate article.

One key personality with Atkinson and Foss at the time of the Duggan Bros. purchase was Billy Dick who managed the side show. He had been a well known female impersonator, serving on such shows as Andrew Downie's Walter L. Main railroad circus in the early 20s, and G. W. Christy's Golden Bros. and Christy Bros. shows. He went with Chester Monahan's version of Gollmar Bros. in 1924 and most of 1925 when it was a gilly type



Ed Oakes, boss canvasman of Barney Bros. in 1936. Pfening Archives.

railer. Dick in drag worked the come-in, danced in the big show spec, performed in some aerial numbers, and was a cooch dancer in the side show. He became a side show operator in the mid 1930s and finally part owner of a circus.

The December 19, 1936 *Billboard* reported: "Barney Bros. Circus closed a very successful season of 30 weeks on November 7 at Blythe, California and jumped to Phoenix, Arizona for the winter. Through his friend Jerry Doyle, Tom Atkinson has established quarters right at the city limits. A crew of eight men is getting the shops ready for action as everything will be gone over. A new fleet of trucks from Charles Goss has been received. During the 1935 season two ponies, four lions, one kangaroo, and one elephant were added to the menagerie. The show covered 10,000 miles, missing one matinee and showing twenty Sundays."

The following week it was announced in *Billboard* that Billy Dick's side show would again be with Atkinson, making the fourth season with him. The performers had been re-engaged and several new acts added. Thomas Arenz would again handle the front and James Lewis, the side show band. Three large pythons were bought and a new double deck banners had been ordered. The big top was to be a 60 with two 30s. Another title was to be used instead of Barney Bros.

So far there had been no indication in the trade publication that Atkinson and Foss had ended their partnership. However, the January 2, 1937 *Billboard* told the story of the split with few details: "Activity at Barney Bros. Circus in quarters at Glendale, Arizona is in full blast. Following the parting of Tom Atkinson and John D. Foss, Foss retained the title, big top, half the seats, the light plant and trailer, pole truck and trailer, calliope, midway lighting equipment, lion cage and two lions, four wheel trailer and monkeys and a bear cage. Also kept were three ponies and colt and all printed matter. All motor vehicle tags for 1937 have been purchased."

Joe Rettinger tells the story of the split: "Tom Atkinson and John D. Foss brought Barney Bros. to Phoenix to winter. Jerry Doyle and his son, George, drove to Blythe, California where Barney closed November 7, 1936 to meet their friend Tom Atkinson and moved the show to Jerry Doyle's lot near Six Points, which at the time was at the Phoenix city limits. The state of Arizona wanted Barney to buy plates as they entered the state but Jerry Doyle went to the high-

way department with Atkinson and promised that they would buy 1937 plates for all of the trucks, which they did.

"Atkinson and Foss parted company. Foss retained the Barney Bros. title and equipment and moved his circus to the old Augar beat factory near Alendale, Arizona. Carl M. Devere acquired one half interest in Barney Bros.

"Atkinson with the Barney equipment and animals he retained remained at the Doyle property where he framed a new show for the 1937 season."

Howe Bros. Circus newspaper ad featuring Herr Driesbeck. Pfening Archives.

**HOWE
BROS.**

**BIG 3 RING
WILD ANIMAL
CIRCUS**

**WITH
HERR DRIESBECK**

Greatest wild animal trainer
of all Europe /

A Really BIG SHOW

**3 ACRES OF TENTS
HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE
HORSES-CAGES AND
DENS OF ANIMALS
25 FAMOUS JUMPING CLOWNS
15 DANCING HORSES
2 HERDS OF ELEPHANTS**

**One Day Only
FRIDAY, MAY 14**

The circus world received the first news of Atkinson's new show in the February 27, 1937 *Billboard*: "Tom Atkinson is no longer connected with Barney Bros. He is putting out Howe Bros. 3 Ring Wild Animal Circus. Everything is humming at quarters in Phoenix. Several new trucks have been added and all canvas is new. There will be two trucks and two cars in advance and fifteen trucks back on the show. Billy Dick's side show will be a 60 with two 30s and will have a 160 foot double deck bannerline; menagerie is a 60 with two 30s, big top, an 80 with three 30s. There will be three rings and an arena featuring wild animal acts trained and worked by Capt. John Hoffman. Show will have a ten piece band and calliope."

There was no further news about new Howe show until an ad appeared in the March 20 *Billboard* wanting performers and band men. Route given was Douglas, 18; Benson, 19; Chandler, 20; Phoenix, 22-23. All Arizona.

Although the *Billboard* placed the show's opening at Tucson, Arizona, March 13, other accounts say it actually opened at Mesa on March 11, and played Florence on the 12th before moving to Tucson.

The March 27 *Billboard* covered the Howe opening: "After wintering in Phoenix, Howe Bros. 3 Ring Circus, owned by Tom Atkinson opened and is now touring Arizona towns. Three new trucks and an elephant will be added at Phoenix, March 22-23.

"The show opened in Tucson and played before a large crowd, even though the weather was bad. The show has ten

Maxine doing free act on the Howe Bros. midway. Pfening Archives.



working acts in the side show directed by Billy Dick, assisted by Tommy Arenz. Under the big top are 25 acts. Ray O'Wesley is equestrian director, assisted by Frank Derewski. In the performance are Esperanza Gutierrez, prima donna; Capt. John Hoffman and his lions; Floyd Dickenson's pony drill; swinging ladders featuring Biddie O'Brien, Eileen Westlake, and Little Toto; Westlake Duo, slack wire and juggling; the Derewski Troupe, head and foot slides; Grace Orton Troupe, wire act, juggling, and rolling globe; Mona Contreras, high wire; Eileen Westlake and Biddie O'Brien, trapeze; clowns; Lawrence Cross, producing [clown], and Lew Walton, Little Mike, Henry Franks, and Melvin Westlake. Buck Steele and his troupe are presenting the concert.

"Side show acts: Luck and Tommy Arenz, shooting through a woman; Madame Lea, mentalist; European bird circus; Marlene, escapes; Georgotte; Punch and Judy and magic by Tommy Arenz; Ina Corene, Hawaiian revue; Mary Faulley, sword box; Violet Richards, big snakes. Pit show, Burney Shafer, owner and manager. In charge of tickets are Jimmie Stearns and Fred Ashley.

"The outside lunch stand is managed by Mrs. Burney Shafer. Johnny Kearns is in charge of the candy stands. Elmer and Eva Vorees are in charge of the cookhouse. Miss Brownie Atkinson is in the main ticket wagon. Side show boss canvasman is Bob Hoffman; Ed Oates is big top boss canvasman.

"Two billposting trucks are in advance. George Duval is contracting agent. Charles (Butch) Cohn is on front door and is legal adjuster."

A different note said that on March 12 the show entertained 750 prisoners in the Arizona State Pen at Florence. The prison yard was used for the show grounds.

The elephant, Maxine, was again leased from W. C. Richards and joined early in the season. She was also used to present a free act on the midway.

The U. S. Printing & Engraving Co. of Kansas City, Missouri provided stock lithos for the Howe show. The same company printed a herald for the show. Some of the herald is quite hilarious. The front page and lead photo announces the presence of Herr Driesbeck, greatest wild animal trainer of all Europe, with his group of jungle-bred trained lions. Terrell Jacobs is pictured with nine male lions inside a steel arena sporting a long Kaiser Bill type German mustache, by way of the artist's pen.

Other Arizona dates played were at Nogales, Lowell, Douglas, Benson, Chandler, two days in Phoenix, with final stand at Wickenburg, March 24.

The show entered California the next

day at Blythe, but returned for two more Arizona stands at Yuma and Someston. After a Sunday off Howe Bros. returned to California at El Centro which was followed by almost a month of dates in the state. It moved through the desert towns of Calispatria, Indio, Banning, Redlands, and Victorville.

The April 3 *Billboard* reported that Howe Bros. was moving on 15 trucks with the usual house cars. Baker and Lockwood furnished all new canvas. The show was to be in California for a few more stands, then into Nevada and on east. The staff included Tom Atkinson, owner and manager; Roy O'Wesley, assistant manager; Art Powell, lot superintendent; Henry Bland, band leader; George Dawson, master of transportation; Felix Duval, director of publicity; Douglas Spicer, contracting agent; T. J. O'Brien, special agent and brigade manager; Roy Roberts, boss billposter; Charles Coleman, boss lithographer; Vates Lola, schools and radio.

Auburn on April 22 was the final stand in California. The show moved into Nevada at Carson City the next day. Then it played Virginia City, Gardnerville, Yerington and was in this area when this advertisement appeared in the May 1 *Billboard*: "Howe Bros. Circus Wants performers and concert people. Fallon, April 28; Austin, 29; Battle Mountain, 30; Elko, May 1; Winnemucca, 2. All Nevada."

The show moved down in the old gold fields of western Nevada playing Tonopah, May 7 and Goldfield, the 8th.

We don't have a full route for Howe. The next known date following Goldfield was at Fillmore, Utah, May 14, and Delta, the next day.

It is almost two weeks later before the next known stand at Rawlins, Wyoming on May 27, followed by Landers and Riverton. The show, still in the state, was at Lusk, June 3, then played New Castle and Sun Dance. By the tenth it was at Lemmon, South Dakota, and the following day at Hettinger, North Dakota and from all indications remained in that state through June.

The June 5 *Billboard* covered Howe Bros. activities by stating the show had covered a lot of territory, going west into California up and around the Bay District, into mining towns of the Mother Lode district where business was very satisfactory. Entering Nevada at Carson City and played route 1A towns to a big business, then into Utah in the mining and smelter towns where the show did a very good business. Howe's circus, it was said, was the first circus to exhibit at Bingham Canyon and had a wonderful day's business.

Continuing, the article said in Wyoming the show encountered a lot of

wind and cold. Since the opening the only stand lost was at Mojave, California, on account of high wind. The show contemplated making permanent quarters in Phoenix, Arizona where the personnel made many friends. The advance was under the direction of George Duvall, and Gertrude Duvall was on radio and schools. The show was headed into the Black Hills for several days.

This advertisement appeared in the June 26 *Billboard*: "Wanted for Howe Bros. Circus, cornet, baritone, concert people, man and wire, ride manager, work elephants, ponies, dogs. Langdon, June 24; Rollette, 25; Bottineau, 26, all North Dakota."

Known dates place Howe in North Dakota at Dunseith, July 8; Rolla, 9th, and Cando, 10th. On the 22nd it was at Lake Andes, South Dakota, and the 23rd at Spencer, Nebraska. The last three days in July had the show playing Wayne, 29; Pender, 30; and West Point, 31; all in Nebraska, and on August 2 it was at Columbus.

In August *Billboard* coverage greatly increased. A report in the August 7 issue, dated Spencer, Nebraska, July 31, said Howe Bros. Circus had travelled over 10,000 miles and had had good weather and business. Several additions had been made on the show. Owner-manager Tom Atkinson had added another elephant. (However the Woodcock elephant files do not support this.) Paul Headley, recent band leader on Barney Bros. Circus, joined and played cornet solos for Henry Blank. Billy Dick had added three pythons to his side show. He also had purchased a male lion from the West carnival. It was used in the Wallace untamable act. Two pumas and three leopards were also added by Dick. The Everettes, a trapeze act, and Three Coltons, acrobatic tumblers, were recent additions to the big show. Manager Atkinson purchased two Chevrolet trucks, one of which was made into a sleeper for the band. Jimmy Neusam had returned from Little Rock, Arkansas where he purchased a strip of land for Atkinson who said that Little Rock would be winter quarters. Quarters would have ample ground for stock to run on, heating facilities for animals and a ring barn where Prof. John Hoffman would break new acts. Clown alley was directed by Lawrence Cross and had two new additions. Elmer Voris, with two trucks, his private car, and nine men, made up the flying squadron which left each night ahead of the show and had breakfast ready when the first truck arrived in the morning.

The following week the *Billboard* in apiece dated Columbus, Nebraska, August 7, reported that at Wayne, Nebraska on July 29 a terrific windstorm struck the



Howe Bros. poster printed by U. S. Printing and Engraving Co. Circus World Museum collection.

show prior to final acts of the afternoon performance. The audience was dismissed in an orderly manner and Manager Atkinson gave word to tear down. At eight o'clock that night four feet of water was on the lot. Other notes said the show continued to do good business. A Mr. Anderson of Omaha with three assistants was installing two air conditioning machines in the big top.

The August 21 *Billboard* had good coverage of the Howe show: "Concordia was Howe Bros. Circus first date in Kansas. Crops are good and good business is expected in the state. Business was very good in Nebraska. Show played day and date with State Fair Shows at Fairbury."

Other notes in the piece noted that Riggs Society Circus closed July 7 in Veling, Nebraska and its equipment was stored in quarters. Performers and wild animals had joined the Howe show. Animals were added to the menagerie in Billy Dick's side show. Dick had installed a loud speaker. New acts for the big show were Art Frasier, hand balancing and single trapeze; Riggs and Riggs, aerial gym-

nasts; William Kempsmith, clown, and troupe of dogs; Popeye and company, shoulder and carrying high perch act; and Three De Lavons, ground tumbling and comedy acrobats. Ed Oates had fourteen men on the big top crew. Calvin Spike had six men on seats. John Kern had six agents on his privileges, soft drinks etc.

Following its stand at Herington, Kansas on August 19, the show moved into Missouri for four days in Kansas City, but returned to Kansas to finish out the month. September 1 found it at Mt. Vernon, Missouri, followed by Greenfield, Eldorado Springs, Hermonville, Camden-ton, and Lebanon. From sketchy dates for the next couple weeks it appears the show continued in Missouri with the last stand at Steele on the 24th. Then it went into Arkansas at Trumann the next day.

There was a general shakeup in the advance crew. A *Billboard* report in September from Chaunute, Kansas provided a roster of the Howe advance crew. It listed J. C. Admire, general agent; W. A. Jack, contracting agent; Gladys Admire, special merchant ticket sales and grocery banners; Charley Coleman, manager of advertising cars and press contractor; W. M. Bill, story man, and Roy Roberts, boss billposter. Douglas Spicer was boss lithographer, assisted by Ray and Will Bandy, Harry Hones, Lester Waite, Charles Darr, Doc Good, and Al Spencer. Warren Curran was 24 hour and bannerman. Ray O'Wesley was press agent and Ralph Bliss, special agent.

Howe Bros. remained in Arkansas until early October with the final stand at Cotton Plant on October 6. The October 9 *Billboard* reported: "Howe Bros. will play twelve stands in Arkansas and many in Louisiana. It will probably remain on road until second Saturday in December. Show had twenty-one towns in Missouri, the larger towns giving it the best business. Most of the people have been with it all season. Show has roster of 175 people, 14 in advance, 55 vehicles. There are 17 semi trailers, all Chevrolets. The show carries a national Chevy advertisement for the season.

"Howe Bros. will play the first day of the fair at Athens, Alabama and will be on the infield of the race track. Circus billposting has started." There is no evidence the show had the number of motorized units or personnel listed. This seems to be mostly a press man's imagination. In reality the show moved on about fifteen trucks, of which half appear to have been owned by Billy Dick or others.

A week later the *Billboard* continued its Howe Bros. coverage in an article dated Bolivar, Tennessee, October 9: "The Howe show played eleven stands in Arkansas to good business, entering at Trumann, September 25. Marianna, Dewitt, and Eng-



Howe Bros. ticket semi. Pfening Archives.

land were the biggest, sellouts at each performance. Show made a 180 mile jump from Cotton Plant, Arkansas to Bolivar. Three stands will be played in Tennessee. It will make a one day stand at Athens Alabama Fair on October 12. Show will probably go to the east coast and Gulf of Mexico before the season ends in December. It is putting up plenty of paper. Charles R. Coleman is handling billing brigade, including Roy Roberts, opposition biller. Local contracting and press contracting is done by E. E. Jacks."

Other Tennessee stands were at Waynesboro and Pulaski. One source said that Somerville was booked for October 7, the initial date in the state, but if the above *Billboard* story is correct, it was blown with the show making the long 175 mile jump directly to Bolivar.

Other known Alabama stands were, in addition to Athens, at Cullman, Hartsville, Piedmont, and Guntersville. There were at least four others. It seems the show then returned to Tennessee for at least one and possibly more stands. The October 30 *Billboard* in a story dated Chattanooga, Tennessee, October 23, said the advance of Howe Bros. was in its 35th week, had travelled 14,000 miles, had covered 16 states and had heavy opposition in the Middle West and South. Opposition had included Hagenbeck-Wallace, Ringling-Barnum, Moon Bros., Alabama Minstrels, and Lassie White Radio Review.

The show was next routed into Georgia in late October and early November with known stands at Cedartown, October 27; Tallapoosa, 28; Carrollton, 29; Cuthbert, November 3; Sylvester, 4; and Blackshear, 11.

In the meantime that area experienced very cold weather beginning in mid October which continued for some time. It adversely affected the business of all shows touring that part of the South.

There is some confusion as to when Howe Bros. closed its season. The November 20 *Billboard* in a story dated Fitzgerald, Georgia, November 13 (two days after last known date at Blackshear on the

11th), said that C. R. Coleman, former brigade agent on Howe Bros., took over the duties of general agent when J. C. Admire left. The show would probably be kept on road until Christmas in southern Georgia and Florida. The advance expected to remain two more weeks in Georgia, then go into Florida. It had been cut to six men, there now being no opposition.

J. C. Admire wrote a letter in the November 27 *Billboard* stating he had seen a notice in the previous issue about C. R. Coleman but said he had a letter from Coleman saying he left Howe Bros. at Blackshear, Georgia, November 11, where he was still brigade agent. One source definitely states that Howe Bros. closed the 1937 season at Blackshear but there is strong evidence that at least several more weeks on the road were planned.

A thorough search of the *Billboard* files fails to turn up any other mention of Howe Bros. for the remainder of 1937. Blackshear, Georgia is within fifty miles of the Atlantic coast and with the show being equally as close to the Pacific coast earlier in the season means that Tom Atkinson had made a coast to coast tour, somewhat of a rarity back then, or even now, for a motorized show. Tom Mix did it in 1936 as did Sam B. Dill's Gentry-Robbins outfit in 1931. The 1937 season saw Atkinson return to territory near the east coast which he hadn't played since 1921. If reports were correct of good business as late as September and early October then something must have hit the show to cause a sharp downturn in business during the final weeks. Whatever the cause Atkinson lost his show. It was repossessed by the U. S. Printing and Engraving Company.

The January 15, 1938 *Billboard* carried this advertisement: "For sale, complete motorized circus. Seven trucks, trained animal act, 6 trained ponies, lions, kangaroos, tigers, bears, wolves, covotes, light plant, complete, ready to go for liquidation--\$5,000 cash. Circus could not be replaced for from \$12,000 to \$15,000. Must be sold this week. For information write, or wire. U. S. Printing & Engraving Co., 1640 Central, Kansas City, Missouri. P. S. Pay your wires."

Atkinson's name wasn't mentioned until the January 23, 1938 *Billboard* which said in a piece dated Orange, Texas, January 16, that the Robbins

show crew and equipment had arrived in Orange and would be there for about 30 days, during which time a considerable amount of training and reconstruction work was planned by Tom Atkinson, manager. Thirty-two people were on hand, some new house trailers would be bought. Capt. John Hoffman would break a number of new cats and bears. The show had leased the fairgrounds from the city as temporary headquarters. Atkinson said that he would pull out late in the winter. Included among animals being displayed daily as zoo exhibit were el-

Howe Bros. Circus herald used in 1937. Pfening Archives.

HOWE BROS.

3 RING WILD ANIMAL Circus

- WITH -
HERR DRIESBECK
Greatest Wild Animal Trainer of All Europe
With His Group of Jungle-Bred Trained Lions



Mammoth Menagerie and Horse Fair
WHICH IS A TRAVELING UNIVERSITY OF NATURAL HISTORY



AN IMPERIAL COLLECTION OF RARE WILD BEASTS
ACRES OF RAIN-PROOF TENTS
HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, HORSES AND
DENS OF WILD AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS
REALLY A BIG CIRCUS
AFTERNOON AND NIGHT PERFORMANCES
REGARDLESS OF WEATHER CONDITIONS
SPECIAL AIR CONDITIONED TENTS - WILL EXHIBIT - WHEN THE TEMPERATURE DEMANDS
AT

COMING SOON

WATCH FOR DAY AND DATE

Only Big Circus Coming this Season

U. S. T. TRAVELERS PRESENT CREDENTIALS FOR FREE ADMISSION
DON'T FAIL TO BRING THE CHILDREN

ephants, tigers, bears, wolves, kangaroos, monkeys, apes and others.

In mid February Billy Dick left Atkinson and his circus property was put up for sale by the mortgage holder. Dick bought Art DeVere's interest in Barney Bros. Thus for 1938 Atkinson's old partner John Foss and Billy Dick would operate the Barney Bros. circus which went out under that title but was soon changed to Golden Bros. It is interesting that during the early weeks of 1938 Foss and Atkinson were in quarters at the extreme eastern and western ends of Texas, Atkinson at Orange while Foss and his new partner Dick had their show quartered in El Paso.

The February 26 *Billboard* told the fate of Atkinson's show in a piece dated Kansas City, February 19: "Howe Bros. Circus wintering at Orange, Texas has been sold. Frank West, owner of West's World Wonder Shows, completed a deal with O. N. Walters, manager of U. S. Printing and Engraving Co, this city, for all animals. They were shipped to Norfolk, Virginia by rail and truck. Remainder of property has been bought by a local attorney. Announcement is made that Joe B. Webb, formerly with Seal Bros. Circus, will be manager of a show which will open February 28 at Orange under title of Art Mix Circus. Mix

(a brother of famed movie cowboy and owner of the Tom Mix Circus) will be with the show which will be on 14 trucks. Two trucks will be on advance, also will have two press agents and five bill-posters."

Later it was reported the Art Mix Circus and Rodeo would open March 7 at Orange, Texas under auspices of the American Legion. It would move on 15 trucks. Big top was to be an 80 with three 30s; menagerie 60 with two 30s. Side show was to have fifteen acts, and the big show a twelve piece band. Joe B. Webb

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ETHEL ATKINSON, TREAS.



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PERMANENT ADDRESS
1640 CENTRAL STREET
KANSAS CITY MO.

JOE B. WEBB
GENERAL MANAGER

**CIRCUS
and
RODEO**



Letterheads used by Tom Atkinson shows. The 1929 Robinson Bros. is printed in red and blue. The 1936 Barney Bros. is printed in red, blue and yellow. The Howe Bros. is printed in red, yellow and blue. The 1938 Art Mix is printed in blue and red on yellow paper. Pfening Archives.

was listed as manager, Ed Hiler, as general agent, and Tom Atkinson, superintendent. The March 19 *Billboard* listed Tom Atkinson as assistant manager.

The elephant Maxine, owned by W. A. Richards, didn't go with the new Art Mix

show but instead was leased to the new Parker & Watts Circus.

The Art Mix circus has been long remembered as the first of a long list of shows, large and small, to fold in 1938, the worst of all circus seasons in modern times. It lasted but a month, falling victim to the sharp sudden business recession which hit early that year. The April 16 *Billboard* said the Art Mix Circus folded April 6 at Hobbs, New Mexico due to lack of business. Joe B. Webb was quoted as saying that he had only two days business in four weeks. The equipment was then sold to Carl DeVere. Art Mix joined Chase & Son Circus.

A couple weeks later Art Mix told the *Billboard* that he had leased his title to U. S. Printing & Engraving which appointed Joe B. Webb manager. After a month Mix said he withdrew the title.

This version of Mix's involvement was corrected in the May 7 *Billboard* in which U. S. Printing's president O. N. Walters wrote, "our business is printing show paper. We have never leased any show title. While it is true we held a mortgage on the show (as we do on many other titles) we had nothing to do with management of same."

It is not known if Tom Atkinson remained with the Mix show for its entire life of one month or not but in any event he

would depart this life before another month passed. His death came May 5. His obituary was printed in the May 21, 1938 *Billboard*. It read: "Tom Atkinson for many years operator of the Tom Atkinson Circus and interested in other shows died May 21 in Clayton, New Mexico, after several weeks illness. Survived by his widow, Ethel, a brother, and sister. Burial in Clayton, New Mexico."

Illustrations have been frustratingly hard to locate. I'd like to thank Fred Dahlinger, Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin, and Fred D. Pfening Jr. for help in preparing this article.

A recent *White Tops* article reported that Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey have ended the practice of having vendors working the seats during performances. The article calls it "an unprecedented move," but it is far from that.

The reason for the change was that "zealous vending was an irritant to many spectators," according to a spokesman for the circus.

"Kenneth Feld saw it as an idea whose time had come," the spokesman is quoted as saying.

To this we have to add that the idea has come *again* for the same decision was announced for the same reasons in 1879.

Selling food to the circus audience is almost as old as the institution itself. The early temporary arenas that were built in the larger cities almost all had bars, and pushed their use by having intermissions in the program.

When the shows went to tents and wagons in the nineteenth century, candy wagons were included in the train, either show-owned or run by privilege men. One of the earliest circus contracts we have is one between Jacob Anthony, a privilege man, and June, Titus & Angvine, dated April 1841. By its terms Anthony was allowed to travel with the company for the purpose of retailing confectionery, fruit, lemonade, etc. For this

Sparks seat butchers in 1925. The white jackets were traditional and were furnished by candy and cola companies. Pfening Archives.

HERE WE GO AGAIN

BY STUART THAYER

privilege he paid the show nine dollars a week. Oddly, if he could afford it, he was to pay ten dollars a week. His horse and wagon were sold to him by the menagerie and the terms of the payment for them was part of the contract as well.

George S. Cole in a 1904 *Billboard* described the candy privilege on the Aaron Turner circus in 1849. It sold for a dollar a day. The privilege man had a light wagon of which half of one side let down to become a counter where candy, gingerbread, lemonade, cigars and fans were displayed.

The earliest notice of seat butchers we have found is in the nature of a complaint in the *Peoria Weekly Republican* of 4 May 1858. It reads: "The licensed dealer in lemonade became exceedingly impertinent to a gentleman who very properly silenced him and led him out of the tent. These vendors of knickknacks at all public shows are simply nuisances and every discreet manager should abolish them."

Another, in the *Lansing (Michigan) Republican* of 26 June 1874 says: "... we must mention one nuisance which threatens to diminish the patronage of such shows, namely the boisterous and continuous peddling of peanuts, lemonade, song books, tickets for the concert, etc. Everybody we have talked with about it was irritated by this vexation."

The Cooper & Bailey circus in 1879 decided to do

away with seat vendors, no doubt as a reaction to just such complaints as we've reprinted. Their ad in the *Detroit Free Press* in May of that year said: "Objectionable features such as candy, lemonade and peanut vendors have been eliminated."

And in the *Pantagraph* of Bloomington, Illinois on 13 September they advised: "You will find no candy, lemonade or peanut swindlers with us."

J. L. Hutchinson took over the privileges with the show in 1880, and he continued the practice of not allowing vending in the seats.

The 1880 courier had a statement reading, "It has long been complained by a suffering and patient public, that the peddling of candy, prize packages, lemonade, etc on the seats by irresponsible and vulgar 'candy butchers' was the occasion of much annoyance. . . ."

The 1881 Barnum and London courier had a similar statement. In this later year Sells Bros. followed suit and the York, Pennsylvania *Evening Dispatch* of 9 August commented: "... audience sat in peace during the entire performance, not once being bothered with vendors of peanuts or bad lemonade. The refreshment department is confined entirely to one tent."

How long these rules were in effect is not yet known. Seat work was certainly restored at some point. And, as is obvious by Mr. Feld's decree, again worked its magic to the point that it discomposed the audience.

Seat butchers in action on the Clyde Beatty Circus in 1949. Circus World Museum collection.



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There is not much to be said of Col. G. W. Hall & Son's New United R. R. Shows that was not said by the show itself.

The August 19, 1892 Nortonville *News* carried an advertisement for Hall's coming exhibitions of August 30.

"Col. G. W. Hall & Son's New United R. R. Shows Triple Arena. Zoological Gardens. Thrilling Sights, Daring Deeds Uncommon things Make Common Things Forgotten. The One Great Show of the World! Dens of Wild Beasts, Snake Charmer, Mid-Air Bicycle Act, Troup of Trained Stallions. Nortonville, August 30."

The advance agent placed a few short statements in the local columns of the *News*: "Col. G. W. Hall's grand combined railroad shows will exhibit at Nortonville August 30th."

"Don't fail to take in the circus, August 30th. Triple arena, zoological gardens, snake charmers, bicycle performers, tight rope walking and other thrilling deeds and daring acts."

"Hall's circus is coming August 30th, in all its glory and oriental splendor."

"While setting on the side track the advance car 'caught fire from the flue of the boiler while here Wednesday [August 17]. It was extinguished before any damage was done."

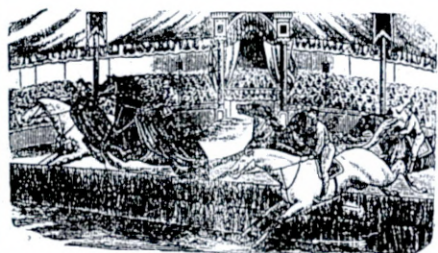
On September 2 the *News* commented: "There is one redeeming feature about

Hall ad in the August 19, 1892 Nortonville, Kansas *News*. Kansas State Historical Society.

Col. G. W. Hall & Son's

NEW UNITED R. R. SHOWS

TRIPLE ARENA. - Zoological Gardens.



Thrilling SIGHTS, DARING DEEDS
"Uncommon things Make Common Things Forgotten."

THE ONE GREAT SHOW OF THE WORLD!

Dens of Wild Beasts, Snake Charmer, Mid-Air Bicycle Act, Troup of Trained Stallions.

Nortonville, August 30

THE ONLY TRIPLE-HORNED UNICORN A RACING HERD of WISEST ELEPHANTS

Chapter 10, Part Two, 1892
By Orin Copple King

Copyright © 1990 Orin Copple King

Hall's circus. The usual army of gamblers was not along."

The only other known date for Col. Hall is Carbondale, September 1. No word of the show appeared in the *Carbondalian* until the show had come and gone. The editor gave the Colonel slight recognition: "Hall's circus showed here on Thursday to a very slim crowd. And from what people say and what we saw of the parade, we don't think it amounted to much."

There was a show at Baxter Springs on June 23, about which nothing is known, not even the title. The *Baxter Springs News* covered it all on June 25: "The Quappaws were out in full force Thursday to attend the circus."

"The farmers could not leave their fields to attend a jim crow show, so the circus was not well patronized."

"The circus band was great. It was composed of six members of the Baxter band and four men with the circus."

Raymond's Renowned United Shows made a late in the season tour of Kansas in 1892, the first known date being September 19 at Spring Hill. The *Spring Hill New Era* ran three small handouts on the 15th.

"RAYMOND'S CIRCUS. In attraction of modern amusement features, the above shows no doubt are head and shoulders above anything ever seen here, and being liberally billed—as they are—will certainly call out the masses on September 19."

"RAYMOND'S CIRCUS. The grand aggregation of Circus, Museum and Menagerie will exhibit here on September 19. The great show is regarded by the Eastern Press as the best of the kind."

"RAYMOND'S CIRCUS. With its world of wonders, as can be seen elsewhere in our columns, will be here for two grand exhibitions on September 19."

The same advertisement appeared in

every town played. The most interesting aspect of the ad was an illustration presenting the title embellished with an elephant, a lion and a bareback rider in a most precarious position.

"The World's Recognized Leading Tented Wonderland. 10 Times the best circus, Museum Caravan and Menagerie, On the face of the Globe. RAYMOND'S RENOWNED UNITED SHOWS. First Tour of the West. Coming on its own special train. All new famous features! Grandest exhibit of the era! Performances at usual hours will exhibit at SPRING

HILL September 19. Over 500 Famous features. Never before in this country. The Guatemalan Twins at a salary of \$1,000 per week \$1,000.

"Living wild animals from every zone, wonders of the deep from every ocean. Strangest specimens of humanity ever born. The most daring feats ever performed. Most money ever invested to secure wonders."

"All new features. All new acts. Greatest surprises, Greatest performers, greatest museum, greatest circus, greatest aquarium, greatest menagerie, greatest caravan, Greatest wonders, Greatest satisfaction. Two Grand Exhibitions Daily! Rain or Shine. Doors open at 1 and 7 o'clock p. m. One hour given for the inspection of Animals, Curiosities and Scientific inventions. Performance begins at 2 and 8 o'clock."

Col. George W. "Popcorn" Hall, Wisconsin circus owner. Pfening Archives.



By 1892 the conflict between religion and circus performances had all but disappeared. One of the last vestiges of intolerance appeared in the *Spring Hill New Era* on September 29: "The presence of the show here last week caused a great deal of discussion on account of some of the church members attending. It seemed to be pretty well settled, by those not church members, that church members ought not to go to a circus, they did not stop to consider that if it was wrong for one person to attend it was wrong for another whether a member of the church or not. A crime is a crime no matter by whom committed."

Was it a crime to accept money for a circus advertisement?

The *La Cygne Weekly Journal* reported that: "Raymond's circus attracted many people to La Cygne Tuesday [September 20]. The show was a good one."

Handouts in the *Pleasanton Observer* heralding the exhibitions of September 21, boasted of the show's quality: "The Big Show."

"The eastern press unite in pronouncing Raymond's circus an exhibition of unusual brilliancy. An exchange says: 'A Modern World's Fair of Wonders.'"

"The Great Show. If what everybody says is true, we are to have the best Circus and Menagerie ever organized at Pleasanton, September 21. The press everywhere indorse it; traveling men are unanimous in its praise."

"Raymond's Circus. Will be here on September 21. An exchange says: From its entry into town and exit, the above show passed off to the entire satisfaction of the public and its patronage. There is none of the rough, rowdyish element visible usually connected with circuses. The performances were of the very best and its many new attractions surprised and delighted all."

After the show had come and gone the *Observer* reported that: "Raymond's circus on Wednesday was up to the average for small town shows. The collections of animals was poor but the acting was good. The boys who tried to buck the elephant at night are a sore but much wiser crowd."

The *Observer* and the *Pleasanton Herald* both failed to report a fight on the show grounds. The *Mound City Progress* of September 2 carried the tale: "We understand that quite a serious disturbance occurred at Pleasanton last Wednesday night, between some Pleasanton boys and the roustabouts of the circus that was performing. It seems that the show men had insulted a couple of girls and the Pleasanton boys interfered when a free for all fight ensued. Several shots were fired by the show men but no serious results fol-

The World's Recognized Leading **SHOW** Tented: Wonderland

10 Times the Best Circus. Museum, Caravan and Menagerie, on the face of the Globe.



WILL EXHIBIT AT

Spring Hill,
Wednesday, Sept, 19

Raymond ad in the September 15, 1892 *Spring Hill, Kansas New Era*. Kansas State Historical Society.

lowed. We are unable to learn further particulars."

Nickel and dime advertisements in the news columns of the *Belleville Democrat* provided a few details of Raymond's show.

"Lavanion and Yazelle, the greatest of acrobats, will be with us at Belleville October 18th."

"The celebrated performing lions, Nero and Kate, said to be a wonder in animal intelligence and brute instinct, will perform with Raymond's Circus on October 18th."

The *Democrat* expressed the opinion that: "The circus has come and gone, and it was not much of a circus either."

The *Mankato Western Advocate* in advance of circus day carried the following handouts: "The Big Show."

"With its varnished wagons, elephants, lions, tigers and other wild and tame animals, will be here in all its glory, and so will the neighbors from around and about the country and villages in our vicinity. October 20."

"RAYMOND'S CIRCUS. Now that we

are to have a real live show, young and old can look forward to October 20th, for the great event."

"RAYMOND'S SHOW. The monster moving wonderland, as the show bills call it, will give two grand exhibitions in our city on October 20th. The press in cities where it has spread its tents, speak of it very enthusiastically, and recommend it to the sight-seer everywhere. It is not only a Famous American Circus, but it is regarded in foreign countries as the greatest of traveling shows."

Mankato's other paper, the *Jewell County Review*, in a handout, announced that: "The wonderful French aerialists, the Suanettes, are a prominent feature of the Raymond Show which will be exhibited here October 20."

Another handout in the *Review* stated that: "A show is what its proprietors make it; good, bad, or extremely indifferent. From all accounts we are to have a first-class exhibition in Raymond's on October 20."

The Raymond aggregation at Smith Centre on October 21 drew a very small crowd, according to the *Smith County Journal*: "The menagerie consisted of an elephant, two lions, two bears, a cage of monkeys and the fat woman. The managers are gentlemen, and the performances were satisfactory to those who were ready to be satisfied with less display and grandeur than could be expected of the Forepaugh combination."

Raymond's Renowned United Shows was gambling recklessly on the weather when they entered the northwest of Kansas. Depending on the calendar the region is either the hottest or coldest part of the state. At Smith Centre on the 18th of October a quarter of an inch of ice was reported.

The exhibitions of October 27 at Colby resulted in a report in the *Free Press* telling of a situation that did not exist in other towns or was ignored by the newspapers. The last word on Raymond's tour of Kansas is quoted: "Raymond's Circus made its appearance as billed on Thursday last and a bigger gambling institution never distracted the borders of civilization. It succeeded in filching from the poor farmer and laboring men and the community generally probably from \$1,500 to \$2,000. It was a pitiable sight to see the people taken in by their smooth games and beaten out of their hard-earned cash by a set of sharks and thieves. Several good citizens were deliberately let down to the tune of \$200 on bogus drafts. Let our citizens take warning from this experience never to bite on another man's game, for nine times in ten the other man gets your money and you are left in the hole."

Raymond's Renowned United Shows in

1892 played, among others, the following confirmed dates: September 19, Spring Hill; September 20, La Cygne; September 21, Pleasanton; October 11, Neodesha; October 12, Augusta; October 14, Herington; October 18, Belleville; October 20, Mankato; October 21, Smith Centre; and October 27, Colby.

At the end of April and early in May Topeka had an abundance of circuses--Sells & Rentfrow, Cook & Whitby, Ringling Brothers, all in a fifteen day period--but it all was prelude to Barnum & Bailey's Greatest Show On Earth, at least in the mind of James A. Bailey who urged the public to "Wait For It," as the show "Will Soon Be Here." A handout placed by press agent Fred Lawrence in the Topeka *Kansas Democrat* on April 29, announced the coming on a date given only as "Soon." Hardly anyone stayed home to wait for Barnum & Bailey.

The death of Barnum in 1891 apparently left Bailey feeling a bit uneasy about the future of the great circus. Would the world accept the show without the great showman? In the "Wait For It" handout Bailey sought to reassure the public that the only change was "bigger and better."

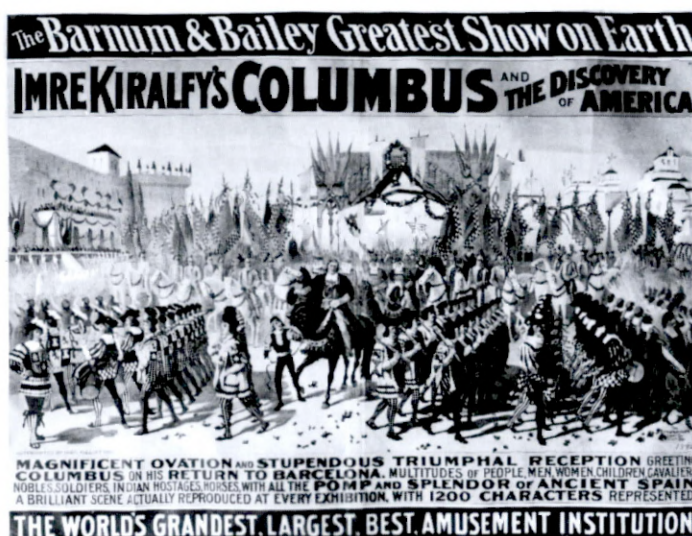
"In a few weeks the 'greatest show on earth'--which, of course, is the Barnum & Bailey show--will be seen in Topeka. The great showman has joined the 'silent majority,' but the show 'still goes marching on' under the able management of Barnum's late associate, James A. Bailey.

"For the ten or a dozen years just preceding the death of P. T. Barnum he had really taken no active part in the management of the great institution with which his life had been so closely identified. Every one knew this, or should have known it. Mr. Barnum never claimed to be a circus man, but he did claim to be a showman. During the latter part of his life the 'greatest show on earth' was always managed by his equal partner, J. A. Bailey, and the wonderful versatility of the latter gentleman was best shown in the tremendous novelties and innovations he introduced into the business, in many instances even going so far as to amaze and surprise Mr. Barnum himself by their ingenious worth and amusing instruction. Every detail connected with the vast institution was and is still personally directed by Mr. Bailey, and every feature or attraction, small or large, was designed, selected or invented by him, but, of course, the name of Barnum, its bigness in the show world, its

wide celebrity and universal character, necessarily absorbed and covered everything connected with the show. What matters it if Bailey designed and Barnum profited--so long as the public benefitted?

"The death of Barnum makes no difference in the popularity or patronage of the show. The receipts of the show were larger last season than ever before, and during the past six weeks the exhibition has done a greater business in New York City than at any previous time in its entire history.

"In a few weeks the establishment will be seen here in Topeka. The great spectacle, 'Columbus and the Discovery of the New World,' is attracting immense audiences. Its equipment represents an investment of nearly a million dollars.



At least sixteen different lithos were printed by Strobridge illustrating the Barnum & Bailey 1892 Columbus spec. Pfening Archives.

"The menagerie, hippodrome, etc., are all improved and enlarged, and 'Wait for Barnum,' will soon be heralded far and wide."

A firm date was announced August 1 when the *Democrat* revealed that Barnum & Bailey would exhibit in Topeka on September 20. Press agent R. T. Hamilton was in Topeka August 23, placing newspaper ads, the first of which appeared in the *Democrat* on September 13. The *Democrat* carried five substantial handouts in the week preceding circus day, plus one published September 8 on the magnificence of the spectacle "Columbus and the Discovery of America."

A popular complaint throughout Kansas concerned the taking of thousands of dollars of cash away from a community. No show took away more money than Barnum & Bailey. The following handout was meant to show the public that thou-

sands of dollars were spent in each town on the route.

"THIS MAY INTEREST YOU. To whom the money goes in every town the Barnum & Bailey show visits.

"There are five advance advertising cars, each having a corps of twenty bill posters, and there are twenty advance agents with different duties to perform, together comprising what is known as the 'Advance Brigade' of Barnum & Bailey's greatest show on earth. This corps of experienced and competent men are as well drilled in their duties as a military organization and to them is entrusted the important business of properly advertising the date of the exhibition of the show, which, by the way, will be here on September 20.

"Contracts are made with various livery stables for teams, with which to reach the surrounding country to post bills and distribute the pretty pictorial books containing the wonderful features of the show, among which is an elegantly illustrated life of Christopher Columbus of thirty-two pages. Contracts are also made for hundreds of pounds of meat, hay, bushels of oats, straw, bran, potatoes, vegetables of all kinds, water, license, ground, with the bill poster for his billboards, with all the hotels, and in fact, with nearly everybody in the town who has something to sell, and this is done in every town in the country where the show

exhibits, the money paid for these things footing up thousands of dollars. Every town where the show goes to is enriched thousands of dollars. When the money spent by the employes of the show is considered, and by the vast number of people who come to town on that day on the railroads and in other ways, the advent of Barnum & Bailey's greatest show on earth causes thousands of dollars to be put in circulation in such town. It is to be doubted if any one has ever considered this fact before."

Most of the handouts distributed by the press department concerned Imre Kiralfy's extravaganza of "Columbus and the Discovery of America," but other features were not neglected.

"There is a full size and perfectly formed horse called a hairless horse, because its glossy body is devoid of even a single hair and which but for the fact of its being alive would seem to have been carved out of stone. Another queer-looking animal is a steer with three perfectly formed horns, three perfect eyes, and three regular nostrils, but which in all

other respects corresponds to the average animal. Still another rare sight is the giant ox, almost as big as some of the elephants, which stands six feet one inch, or eighteen and one-quarter hands high, a truly monster specimen; and beside this again a colossal horse seven feet six inches, or twenty-two and one-half hands tall. By way of contrast to these latter, are several diminutive cattle, veritable dwarfs, thirty-two inches, or only eight hands high, the entire forming probably one of the most interesting and wonderful collections of odd, gigantic and strange living beasts ever seen."

The Topeka *State Journal* was nearly as generous as the *Democrat* in the use of handouts. A press agent's story appeared in the *Journal* on circus day, September 20, which named a few of the artists.

"Among the special features that deserve particular mention are Master Nicholas' exploits on the high-flying wings; Hambhichi's dexterous and curious Japanese display on the high pendulating bamboo pole; Mlle. Zahrah's surprising trapeze performances; the great Japanese double high wire act by Janido and Shangi, who also figure in double ladder specialties of an original and daring character; Hassan Ben Ali's Royal Troupe of Arabian acrobats; S. Oura's ascent of a ladder of razor edged swords with bare feet; the trained sheep of Clara O'Brien, the first sheep ever trained; the wonderful clown elephant, 'Tom Thumb,' whose life was saved at the sacrifice of Jumbo's; the riders, Margaret Doris, William O'Dale and Peter Barlow; those dashing charioteers, Sadie Hoffman, Nellie Rose, William Smith and George Wallace; the whirlwind double four-horse tandem of John O'Brien and Alex. Seibert."

Advertisements failed to name any human performers, but the ads did mention an abundance of trained animals.

"Performing cats, dogs, pigs, sheep, storks, geese, pigeons, lions, tigers, hyenas, panthers, wolves, bears, zebras, elephants, camels, etc., etc., all executing clever tricks. Giant horse, gigantic ox, dwarf zebu, miniature cattle, hairless horse, bull with 3 eyes, 3 nostrils and 3 horns."

Following circus day the Topeka *Daily Capital* reported: "W. E. Franklin, master of transportation for Barnum & Bailey's circus, left yesterday for San Francisco to accompany east a carload of animals for the circus that has just arrived and will be added to the menagerie."

The *Capital* also published the following on the 21st: "Notes From The Cal-

lopie. The circus carries 900 people.

"The keeper of the lions says those born in captivity grow more ferocious than the ones brought from the jungles.

"The cassowary requires the most expensive food of the entire menagerie. It is fed on raw eggs which it swallows whole, shell and all.

"A number of the horses used in the ring are from the estate of the late Prince of Wertenberg. Two of them pulled the royal coach.

"The choruses in the Columbus contain some remarkably fine singers. The entire company is composed of Italians from the opera troupes of the continent.

"The newspaper press of the city was royally taken care of by those two most amiable gentlemen, Messrs. Perley and Christopherson.

"Mr. Bailey traded seven elephants for his zebra. It is the only one in any circus.

The Strobridge company lithographed this courier for the 1892 Barnum & Bailey tour. Pfening Archives.

The animals usually called zebras are jagged (sic). They have no stripes on the legs.

"The pelican and the elephants are the only survivors of the New York fire.

"It requires three complete sets of uniforms to keep the Columbus spectacle looking so bright and clean all the time."

"Everybody wondered what Kiralfy's

brain is made of that he was able to think of all the wonderful effects produced in his great discovery piece.

"Owing to the edict prohibiting the export of any more giraffes they have become very valuable. There is only one now in all Europe. The one with this circus is valued at \$15,000.

"Everything about the Columbus spectacle was made as nearly correct in every detail as scientific observation and research could make it.

"The Italian dancers and singers are all 'sure enough' from Italy and scarcely a dozen of them could carry on an intelligent conversation in English.

"The ballet and choruses are all imported, because the Americans desert when the opera season opens.

"The animals are fed a great amount of vegetables, and many of the more particular ones get nicker-loaf bread.

"The trained cats were the subject of much comment.

"The high tight wire performance of the daring little 15-year-old Spaniard, Nicholas Ceballos, won great applause. He walks a wire twice as high as any other performer and without a pole or umbrella.

"The two lady charioteers are said to hate each other most thoroughly and their race is always 'for blood.'

"One day last week when one of the stand keepers had his back turned one of the camels plunged his nose into a tub of red lemonade and when discovered he had drained it to the last drop. The strange thing about this is that the camel still lives.

"Miss Margaret Doris is considered by Mr. Bailey to be the finest rider he ever saw. She has ridden the whole season without a fall."

"When Barnum's circus was in Topeka," according to the *Journal* on September 24, "it used Topeka Avenue, in transferring all the paraphernalia and wagons from the Rock Island yards to the circus grounds, and did the same in returning to the depot. The wagons were many of them very heavy, and so many of them going over it in succession, considerable damage was done to the brick pavement.

"Assistant City Engineer John Rodgers says that around Fourteenth Street on Topeka Avenue, which is near the circus grounds, the pavement is so badly torn up and crushed that it will be necessary to relay a large portion of it, and along the entire length of the street there are signs of the heavy traffic placed upon it Tuesday. He adds that the foundation put under the pavement is not strong enough to make it acceptable for heavy traffic."

The press in Salina had little to say

about the great show following the exhibitions of September 21, but the *Saline County Journal* reported an incident that most certainly would have riled Bailey had he known it.

"In the Barnum parade was a float representing the inauguration of the first president, and the fellow representing George Washington violated the proprieties of the occasion by borrowing a chew of tobacco from the driver."

Barnum & Bailey's advertising car was in the Santa Fe yards at Hutchinson on May 7, and posted the town for a date coming soon.

Another advertising car, according to the *Hutchinson Clipper* on August 27 arrived over the Rock Island with fourteen men and billed the town for September 22.

The *Hutchinson Weekly Interior Herald* following circus day had a few comments: "There was not an accident of any kind circus day."

"There were fourteen thousand people at the circus Thursday afternoon."

"The police force was increased by two or three men this week, on account of the fair and the circus."

"Everybody waited until Thursday to come to town and then they all come—even the circus."

"The school board granted a holiday Thursday on account of our fall festivities—the fair and the circus."

"The manager of Barnum's street parade estimated Thursday's crowd at twenty-two thousand. It was positively the largest in Hutchinson."

"The Rock Island agent at Arlington sold nearly three hundred tickets to Hutchinson circus day."

The Reno County Fair was in operation September 19 to 24, and added to the crowd that came for the circus.

On the 24th the *Clipper* printed a cogent editorial: "One doesn't have to be a saint to moralize a circus. Especially is it an easy task for one who has seen the seamy side. Divest the average 'show' of its tinsel and paint; puncture the little red balloon; throttle the clown, and the resiquim would not be tolerated in a civilized community. But the American mind clamors for show, and the circus comes to sate our desire for pomp and hollow mockery. It is at the same time a blessing and a curse. By it we are reminded that the fool and his money are soon parted; and then we are impressed with the truth of the wise man's pessimistic observation that 'all is vanity.' It is not unlikely that Pope attended a circus before he penned his es-

say on man. If so, it probably inspired his lines:

'Behold the child by Nature's timely law,
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a

straw;

'Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,



Full page parade illustration from the 1892 Strobridge courier. Pfening Archives.

'A little louder, but as empty quite.'

The circus is an educator, it is a gigantic imposition; it is a humbug of marvelous proportions. We have all this, and yet we like the circus—like its flaming posters, the purple costumes, the gorgeous trappings, the glittering parade, the steam callopie, the giddy trapeze performers, the lazy elephant and the 'measly' lemonade. Really, the circus seems to be a necessary evil."

The traditional circus lot in Wichita, Riverside park, was too small for Barnum & Bailey and the show set up at the corner of Lawrence and Lincoln Streets. Following circus day on September 23, the *Wichita Daily Beacon* ran an interesting story: "Barnum has gone. The show here was well attended at both performances."

"Trampled grass, dust and scattered straw are all that remain on the block below Lincoln on Lawrence to tell of Bar-

num & Bailey's big show in Wichita. When the performance was over last night an army of men soon had all the show properties loaded onto wagons and at 3 o'clock the three trains had pulled out with all aboard.

"The attendance was good at both performances and almost everybody was well satisfied. The grand spectacular production of 'Columbus and the Discovery of America' was the distinctive feature. It was a gorgeous display with remarkable histrionic (sic) accuracy."

"It takes seven acres on which to pitch the tents. One hundred and ten men are employed in the task. The menagerie tent is 100 x 350 feet with an entrance 30 x 40; the side show tent, 100 x 150; big top tent, 480 x 232; dressing room 10 x 150; two wardrobe tents, 50 x 60 and 75 x 100; two cook houses, 60 x 125 each; ring stock horse tent, 95 x 140; baggage stock horse tent, 95 x 230, and the blacksmith and harness shop, 20 x 60. This makes several acres of canvas."

"English and Italian women make up the spectacular chorus. There are only a few American girls among them."

"Outside of the spectacular performance and the menagerie, Ringling Bros.' show compares very favorably with Barnum & Bailey's."

"The big tent seats 10,000 people."

"There are 104 wagons and over 300 horses with the show."

The exhibitions at Leavenworth on September 28 were well covered by the *Evening Standard*: "The city street sprinklers were called into service last night on the show ground at the head of Fifth Street. Providence was not called on, but a gentle shower was sent this morning."

John Sullivan, an employe of Barnum & Bailey's circus had his left leg broken between the knee and ankle this morning while assisting in unloading the heavy show wagons on the levee. He was placed in the police patrol wagon and conveyed to St. John's hospital where he will be kept until able to resume work. The company will pay all the expenses. Sullivan has been with the show nearly all season.

"The maximum temperature yesterday was 75."

"The hotels did an excellent business yesterday and last night."

"During the parade this morning a pickpocket was working his nefarious game in the big crowd at Fifth and Delaware Streets. Dr. Neely was there and es-pied the rascal. After seeing the thief go

deftly through the pockets of half a dozen unsuspecting persons, Dr. Neely seized him by the collar and hustled him off to the police station. He was turned over to the marshal and locked up, the charge preferred against him being theft from the person. He gave his name as Charles Payne, his age as 15 years, and said his home was at Council Bluffs, Iowa. He heard the circus would be here today and had come down to make a little money. His pal was also in the crowd, but escaped. When Dr. Neely nabbed Payne he looked astonished but made no resistance. Nothing of value was found on his person, as he handed over to his pal whatever he abstracted from various pockets as soon as he had done the work.

"Charles Payne, the young pickpocket captured by Dr. Neely yesterday, is still in the city jail. His father was telegraphed at Council Bluffs, Iowa, this morning and it is thought he will come here and take the boy home. S. H. Hatch, another pickpocket, was captured on the show ground yesterday afternoon by Officer Fisher. He is thought to have been a pal of Payne's. His case was continued in police court this morning."

On September 30 the *Standard* reported: "The police this morning received a letter from the father of Charles Payne, the youthful pickpocket, at Council Bluffs, Iowa, in which he emphatically stated that he would do nothing to get the boy out of this scrape. He further stated in the communication that the boy had caused a great deal of trouble and had cost him considerable money at various times, and that he would not have anything further to do with him. Charley could hardly refrain from weeping when informed of the nature of the father's letter."

Most advertising and handouts featured the pageant "Columbus and the Discovery of America." Typical was an advertisement in the *Topeka Kansas Democrat*: "THE BARNUM & BAILEY GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, Containing a world of wonders and delightful attractions, together with Imre Kiralfy's Famous Spectacle COLUMBUS and the Discovery of America."

"Its Grandeur almost surpassing belief, with 1,200 historical characters represented. 3 rings, 2 elevated stages, racing track, sublime ballet, with 300 dancers.

"The most wonderful and grandest of

earthly displays on a stage 450 feet long, in addition to circus, hippodrome, illusions, 2 monster menageries, museums, aviary, aquarium and horse fair.

"Capital invested, \$3,500,000. Daily expenses \$7,300.

"P. T. Barnum and J. A. Bailey, Equal owners. Enchanting presentation of living tableaux. Picturesque exhibitions of Moorish life. Delightful portrayals of Spanish scenes. Realistic battles, desper-



Drawing in the courier showing Columbus landing in the New World. Pfening Archives.

ate sorties, mock fights, Siege of Baza and capture of Granada, first voyage of discovery, triumphs of peace, royal reception of Columbus at Barcelona. The life of the great explorer illustrated from the cradle to the grave, together with all the chief historical events connected therewith. Costumes worth \$250,000. Horses worth \$150,000. Emblems, armor and trappings worth \$50,000. Scenery worth \$75,000."

The best source of information is the program for Kiralfy's "Columbus and the Discovery of America," a pamphlet of 24 pages. The title page reflects the producer's intent: "A most noble theme profusely illustrated with living tableaux. Embellished with grand scenes, realistic battles, ships in motion, tremendous pageants and exquisite picturesque ballets. Imre Kiralfy's COLUMBUS and the Discovery of America. The grandest and most colossal spectacle of all time. Depicting with historical truth and accuracy the life, trials, discoveries and triumphs of Christopher Columbus, and adapted and arranged for production with BARNUM & BAILEY'S Greatest Show On Earth—On the largest stage ever constructed. Incidentally introducing the chief historical events contemporaneous with the first voyage to the New World. The Courier

Company, Show Printers, Buffalo, N. Y."

A page was devoted to credits for the principle creators of the extravaganza, names long since forgotten.

"Superb music expressly composed by Signor ANGELO VANANZI. The Italian poetry and words of songs by Signor Angelo Binotti. The entire historical costumes and accessories designed by Signor Alfred Edel. Executed by Monsieur Edmond Landolff. Costumes of the Oriental ballet in the Alhambra scene expressly designed by Wilhelm. Executed by Miss Fisher. Magnificent scenery designed and executed by Messieurs Amable and Gardy. Chorus and music under the Direction of Signor Beniamino Lombardi. Stage and choreographic director, Signor Ettore Coppini. Entire Spectacle produced, conceived, designed, organized and produced by IMRE KIRALFY, the Author of 'Nero,' 'Venice in London,' etc., etc.

A cast of characters known to every Kansas school boy included: "CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, The discoverer. FERDINAND, King of Castile and Arragon. ISABELLE, Queen of Castile and Arragon. PRINCESS ISABELLA, their daughter."

Mysterious and romantic characters who probably were not household names in Kansas included Donna Beatrix de Bobadilla, Boabdil El Chico, Muza Ben Abel Gazan, Abul Cazin Abdel Melu, Cidi Yahye, Hamet Aben Zarrax, Ayxa La Harra, Zarama, Muley Abdallah, and a host of others.

Among the others were: "Spanish Cavaliers and Knights, Moorish Warriors, Nobles, Pages, Crusaders, Hidalgoes, Clergymen, Courtiers, Peasants, Sailors, Pilots, Indians, Chiefs, Mariners, Viziers, Priests, Notaries, Magistrates, Christian Captives, Moorish Prisoners, Ecclesiastics, Servants, Slaves, Princes, Soldiers, Male and Female Chorus Singers, Dancing Girls, Troubadours, Muleteers, Artisans, Shipwrights, Annorers, Body Guards, Her-alds, etc., etc."

The play was presented in five heroic scenes.

Scene I, The Alhambra Palace.

Scene II, The Ancient Port of Palos, August 3, 1492.

Scene III, The First Voyage of Discovery.

Scene IV, The First Landing in the New World.

Scene V, Triumphal Entry of Columbus into Barcelona.

In the program each scene is described in synopsis. Scene III depended upon some intriguing stage effects.

"After leaving the Port of Palos the vessels are represented as encountering a calm at sea. The sails flap against the masts and the three caravels are apparently motionless. At early sunrise, a breeze springing up, the fleet is gently wafted on its way.

"Columbus, while intently watching the compass, is amazed to discover that the needle has varied, and calls the attention of the pilot to the strange and remarkable occurrence, cautioning him not to divulge the matter to the crew for fear of its alarming them.

"A storm arising, the vessels roll and pitch, and at its subsidence a brilliant meteor is seen falling from the heavens, causing the sailors much fear. Birds of various kinds are now noticed flying about the ships which, together with many kinds of driftwood and floating bushes, are taken as sure indications of the approach to land, for which a constant lookout is kept.

"The crews of the vessels now manifest their discontent at the length of the voyage, and several of the sailors on the Santa Maria gather together in little groups and vent their dissatisfaction in loud complaints against Columbus.

"Upon the latter being informed of their mutinous action, he appears before them, soothing some, stimulating the pride and avarice of others and threatening the more refractory with punishment should they attempt anything to impede the voyage, which had the effect of quelling the mutiny.

"While Columbus and his pilot and several of the mariners are studying the map they discover Martin Alonzo Pinzon at the stern of his vessel pointing to the horizon, and behold him signal, 'Land!' whereupon Columbus throws himself upon his knees to return thanks to God, but the supposed land turns out to be a cloud, to the great disappointment of all. The sun having set night now approaches.

"While Columbus is standing on the deck intently gazing into the darkness he discovers in the distance a small moving light, which seems to dance up and down upon the water far away in front of the

vessel. He calls Pedro Gutierrez' attention to it and then Rodrigo Sanchez, who confirm the discovery. Columbus considers this a most positive evidence of land.

"The report of a gun fired on the Pinta now gives the joyful signal that land is seen, when Columbus and all the crew fall on their knees and join in a chorus of thanks.

"Morning breaks upon the vessels when the land is plainly seen by all and the ships now come to anchor."

All's well that ends well, and Scene V presented a happy ending.

"The scene presented now is one of grandeur and magnificence, and represents the city of Barcelona on the day of



SECTION 10 OF MILLION DOLLAR NEW STREET PARADE.

This parade illustration appeared in a eight page newspaper courier printed by Courier. Pfening Archives.

Columbus' arrival. The return voyage of the great discoverer has been successfully accomplished, and after landing at Palos, the little port he had first started from, he had proceeded to Barcelona to meet the king who had ordered a general holiday. Triumphal arches are erected in the streets which are filled by the populace, and church bells are ringing.

"Soon heralds approach proclaiming the opening of the fete and the coming of the grand triumphal procession. Choruses of song fill the air welcoming the hero of the age. The music of grand military bands is heard in the distance. People rush to various places to get a view of the pageant, which soon makes its appearance.

"Columbus and his followers, together with the Indians he brought with him from the New World, bring up the rear of this grand pageant, with the specimens of the plants, animals, gold and precious stones found in the new territory.

"ENTRANCE OF COLUMBUS INTO

BARCELONA, CHORUSES IN PROCESSION."

The lyrics were written and sung in Italian and were printed in the program in Italian with an English translation running opposite.

"Queste son le damigelle,
Sorridenti ale gentili;
Sono ricchee
sono belle, Sembran fiori d'almo April."

As welcome as the April flowers,
Here come the smiling ladies fair,
Full well they know their beauty's powers,
And for men's hearts they lay a snare."

Not being conversant with Italian it is impossible to judge the quality of the Italian verse, but the translations are unadulterated treacle. The song has twelve stanzas.

"The procession now halts before the throne of Ferdinand and Isabella. Columbus steps forward, presenting the Indians and the ornaments, with all the other evidences of his discovery, and is most cordially received by the royal pair, who confer titles and honors upon him in return for his great achievements. All now kneel in praise while the grand national anthem is chanted, accompanied by the majestic organ of the church.

"Columbus is now escorted by the sovereigns to the royal terrace and views the splendid festivities in his honor. The city now becomes brilliantly illuminated. The people appear with torches and the scene becomes one of animated gaiety.

"A GRAND FINALE OF JOY."

The program contains this: "Notice-In order not to disturb the audience, all persons are earnestly requested to remain seated until the end of the spectacle, and witness the grand finale of joy."

Following circus day on September 20 the Topeka *Daily Capital* reviewed the show: "The great interest that has been awakened in Kansas over the Columbian exposition is probably accountable for the remarkable interest that has been shown in the coming of this big show with its spectacular production of 'Columbus and the Discovery of America.' The wonderful pictures displayed on the billboards and the laudatory notices from the press concerning the piece raised expectations high, yet it can probably be said with truthfulness that there were few people who entered the big tent yesterday without some feeling of misgivings as to the possibility of doing under canvas all that

had been advertised. If these were the feelings of the audience when they went in, surely there was not one who came out but confessed he had seen a greater spectacle than he had even imagined it possible to produce under such circumstances.

"In the evening Columbus appeared first and in the afternoon at the close of the ring performances. To many persons it has been a mystery how the performance was produced under a tent.

"How it was done.

"Unlike most circus interiors, the seats did not extend clear around the outside, but one whole side was hung with painted sliding curtains as in a theatre. To one who has not seen it, however, it taxes the imagination to conjure up a stage 400 feet in length. The central show ring was made with wooden sides, which were removed, leaving a great expanse of clear canvassed space. The display was not given on a little stage, but it occupied the entire tent.

"The scenes of palaces and cities, of courts and ships at sea, were all painted with historic accuracy. So far were the scenes above the ordinary spectacular

production that their real importance could hardly be estimated. The horses were not represented by a man with castinets. The army by a few 'supes,' but in their places were real beasts and riders fully caparisoned from head to foot as in the days of chivalry; the armies were large enough to capture a small town in reality. And then

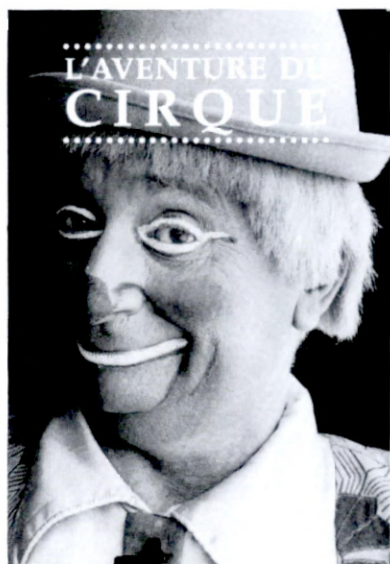
"THE BALLET that took part in the scenes of festivity, that was something never to be forgotten. It was an actual fact that you had to look twice to see the whole length of the line. The usual ballet of Madam De La One Toe and her dozen aides could have been dropped down in their midst and completely lost. Think of a ballet a block long, containing upwards of a hundred perfectly trained girls, with three times as many others whose business it was to show off their evolutions to the best advantage. This many people together can be imagined, but the wealth of pageantry, the glitter of tinsel, the gorgeous array of colors in the oriental costumes, the dancing girls, the swaying bodies, and all the new and startling mechanical effects must be seen to be appreciated.

"The grand exhibition lasted for an hour and covered the many scenes and incidents attendant upon the departure of Columbus for the new world, his landing, and his triumphal return to the throne of Queen Elizabeth (sic), bearing with him the living evidences of the success of the journey that she had enabled him to make."

Columbus and the Discovery of America was about all the culture a Kansas farm boy could stand, and it was, undoubtedly, talked about all winter long at the livery barn.

It is interesting to note that the Kansas press did not refer to the managers as gentlemen, and made no reference to the absence of gamblers and fakirs, and had no stories to tell of shortened performances or other sharp practices. Such was the status of Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show On Earth that its integrity required no defense. Same things are not necessary to say. Some things are common knowledge.

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Circus Life and Adventure of **ADAM BARDY**

Every so often, story books are written that tell of someone who has lived an interesting and adventurous life, and there are times that some local person may come along who has experienced such an adventure in his life's journey. Of local interest is the story of Adam Bardy, who began his "adventure" in 1915, at the age of eight, running away with the great Buffalo Bill Wild West Circus, when the Circus was playing in his home town of Webster, Mass.

This beginning adventure was of very short duration, as Adam met up with gypsy fortune tellers the very next day, and, in their generosity, they gave Adam trolley car fare money, and Adam returned home.

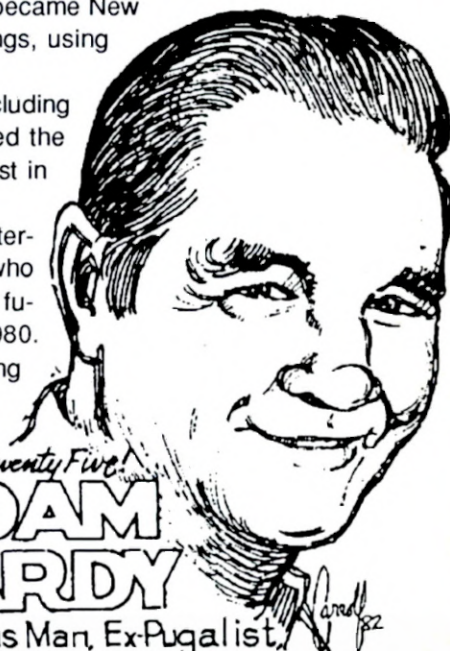
In Adam's teenage years, he lived with woodchoppers in shanties in the woods, and finally in a deserted farmhouse. At the age of seventeen, Adam joined the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus. Other large and small circuses were to be Adam's life, until, in 1929, Adam met up with Kentucky Mountaineers, and the life of a bootlegger was to begin. A thrilling adventure as a big-time bootlegger was Adam's lot in life, until the Conn. State Police wiped out the operation. Adam escaped from custody, and a fugitive's existence lasting seven long years began. During this time, Adam learned all about fortune telling, a life he followed for many years. After that seven years, Adam gave up and turned himself in to the police. He went on to raising beautiful meat and show rabbits, and became New England's largest rabbit breeder. Then he went back to doing character readings, using palm readings and handwriting analysis by mail.

But, of all Adam's adventures, his memories of circus life were the best, including the opportunity to have had personal mends like the great Tom Mix, who joined the Sells-Floto Circus when Adam was with that circus in 1929, and Adam's interest in boxing, which his good friend Tom Mix really loved.

And now, as Adam lives his quiet life out in the country, he has written an interesting book that tells of his forty-seven years with his wonderful late wife, Ann, who was a devoted and loving mate. The story tells of what it was like to live with a fugitive and bootlegger husband all those years, and then of her passing in 1980. Adam recounts his loneliness for three years. Adam continues his story by telling how the palmistry reading of a young twenty-one year old girl blossomed into a wonderful friendship of true love and romance, as it can come to one who has lived an adventurous, interesting life. The story explains how, through deep faith in God, Adam could live this strange, unusual and interesting life, so full of excitement, and still remain the happy-go-lucky person he still is. Adam credits all this to the guiding hand of God.

The interesting life story of Adam includes that of his close companion, twenty-two year-old Terry Lyn Bates. Her story alone is well worth the price of the book, as one can see that age alone is not what counts, but the way we live our lives.

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. For an autographed copy of *Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy*, send check or money order for \$12.95 to:



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